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ABSTRACT

These two manuals provide instructors and participants with a curriculum designed to facilitate collaborative and constructive relationships among teachers and special educators as they direct the work of paraeducators in the delivery of services to students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. The course is intended to require approximately 12 hours of instruction and 10 hours of practicum and can be offered in a variety of settings including inservice training with or without continuing education or university credit. The instructor's manual contains: introductory material, suggestions for using the manual, and four units of instruction. Each unit contains: an overview (with a brief description, unit objectives, and lists of readings and materials); an agenda; a lesson plan; and relevant overhead masters. For each unit, the participant's manual provides a participant's overview, required readings (full-text), and activity sheets/to do lists. The curriculum's four units address the following topics: (1) welcoming, acknowledging and orienting paraeducators; (2) clarifying roles and responsibilities of paraeducators and other team members; (3) planning for paraeducators; and (4) communicating with paraeducators and providing feedback. Various forms are provided including a sample course announcement, a participant registration form, a certification of accomplishment, a list of practicum requirements, a self-assessment review, and participant unit evaluation forms. (Individual sections contain references.) (DB)

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Teacher Leeadership: Working with Paraeducators
Field Test Version 2.0
Instructor's Manual [and] Participant's Manual

Michael F. Giangreco

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Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators

Instructor's Manual

Michael F. Giangreco, Ph.D.

Field Test Version 2.0 September 2001 Feedback is requested

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For updated course information and ideas, check:

www.uvm.edu/~uapvt/paraprep/

(look under "Summaries of Project's Training Materials")

All readings included in the companion *Participant's Manual* for the course,
Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators,
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IDEAs that Work
U.S. Office of Special
Education Programs

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Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators

Instructor's Manual

Note: All course readings, activity sheets, practicum requirements, and the Self-Assessment Review are in a separate Participant's Manual.

Michael F. Giangreco, Ph.D.

University of Vermont
Center on Disability and Community Inclusion
The University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service

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Introduction

Overall Purpose of the Teacher Leadership Training Curriculum

More than anything else, this course is designed to provide a mechanism to bring together teachers and special educators to share ideas, experiences, and strategies and to problem-solve together about how to effectively work with paraprofessionals. Most teachers and special educators who direct the work of paraprofessionals are extremely busy and are thankful to have an extra pair of helping hands to assist with the work that needs to be done for students with and without disabilities. Yet many professionals acknowledge that not enough is done to orient, train, provide feedback to, and support the important work being offered by paraprofessionals. It is not that teachers are unaware of the needs related to paraprofessionals —typically they are keenly aware. Rather, it is more a matter of finding the time to work on this aspect of the classroom program when there are so many other pressing needs. This mini-course provides an opportunity for teachers and special educators to come together to work on paraprofessional issues in practical and supportive ways.

More than anything else, this course is designed to provide a mechanism to bring together teachers and special educators to share ideas, experiences, and strategies and to problem-solve together about how to effectively work with paraprofessionals.

We struggled to give this mini-course a title because so often the word used to summarize the content of this sort of curriculum is "supervision." Although there is nothing inherently wrong with calling this collection of content "supervision," the term has varying contractual meanings across the country and from school to school. In many places the term "supervision" refers to formal observation and evaluation. In preparing these materials, we were reminded by several school administrators that such "supervisory" duties are technically the role of principals or other school administrators. At the same time, everyone we spoke with acknowledged that teachers and special educators really do the day-to-day work with paraprofessionals. So call it what you will, "supervision," "teacher leadership," or "directing the work of paraprofessionals," our main goal is to facilitate more constructive working relationships between paraprofessionals and the certified educational personnel with whom they work most directly.

Although we have long known the importance of addressing paraprofessional issues, this aspect of education for students with disabilities has received additional attention in the field with the reauthorization of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997* [(IDEA), 20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.] and subsequent regulations in 1999. The IDEA requires that state education agencies "establish and maintain standards" to ensure that paraprofessionals "used to assist in the provision of special education and related services to children with disabilities" are "appropriately and adequately prepared," "trained," and "supervised" "in accordance with State law, regulations, or written policy" [20 U.S.C. 1412 § 612(15)]. In other words, the IDEA requires states to ensure that "qualified personnel" will be available to assist in educating students who have disabilities; this includes paraprofessional staff. The IDEA also requires the local educational agency (LEA) to ensure that all personnel working with students with disabilities are "appropriately and adequately prepared" [20 U.S.C. 1412 § 613 (a) (3)].

In an effort to address certain aspects of that requirement, this mini-course is designed to facilitate collaborative and constructive relationships among teachers and special educators who direct the work of paraprofessionals, hereafter referred to as *paraeducators*. Although IDEA uses the term "paraprofessionals," individuals serving in these roles are known by a wide variety of titles such as "instructional assistant," "teacher assistant," "classroom assistant," and others. Our project staff have decided to use the term "paraeducator" because these are individuals who work with, and along side of educators. In this context, the paraeducator is a team member who functions under the direction of qualified teachers or special educators.

This mini-course, *Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators,* is one part of a broader effort to advance the work of paraeducators by providing learning opportunities for both paraeducators and those who direct their work. While this mini-course addresses the roles and activities of teachers and special educators who work with paraeducators in general education settings, there are companion courses specifically designed for paraeducators who work with students with disabilities in general education settings.

The primary focus of these courses for paraeducators is to impart the *initial,* and *most essential,* knowledge and skills necessary for paraeducators to begin their work. These courses do not attempt to include everything a paraeducator might need to know in order to be effective. That is why any such training program should be considered as one part of a more comprehensive plan to recruit, hire, orient, train, and supervise paraeducators on an ongoing basis. For more information on the courses for paraeducators, check our web site at:
http://www.uvm.edu/~uapvt/paraprep/ 10

Philosophical Foundation

The philosophical foundation for this mini-course is based on the recognition that creating inclusive classrooms for students with disabilities requires that personnel, including paraeducators, need to have attitudes, values, knowledge, and skills that explicitly pertain to the context of general education. Inclusive settings require a variety of roles as well as collaboration and communication among various professionals, including general educators. Paraeducators in general education settings need to know how to promote peer interaction and positive interdependence between students with and without disabilities. They need to develop competence in working with diverse groups of students who exhibit varied learning styles within general education settings and who are pursuing differing, individually appropriate, learning outcomes within the same classroom activities. Many paraeducators feel ill-prepared to handle the academic content, social dynamics, and behavioral challenges that need to be addressed within general education classrooms. Similarly, many classroom teachers have received minimal, if any, training in how to work with paraeducators.

The entry-level paraeducator curriculum and this mini-course on teacher leadership emphasize the unique nature of the paraeducator "assisting" in implementing instruction designed by teachers, special educators, and related services providers. Our project staff believes that assessment, curricular design and adaptation, and primary instruction are roles of the educators, special educators, and related services personnel. Therefore, a second philosophical tenet is that we do not expect a paraeducator to be "the exclusive or primary teacher" for students with or without a disability label. Students with disabilities deserve to be educated by certified, qualified teachers in their neighborhood schools, just like students without disabilities. At the same time, we recognize that paraeducators play a vital support role in many classrooms—their work should be recognized and appreciated. It is important for roles to be clarified and for paraeducators to learn the skills most necessary to contribute to a positive, supportive, inclusive educational experience for children without usurping the role of or substituting for the classroom teacher or special educator.

In addition, we have come to recognize the wide array of roles and responsibilities that paraeducators are being asked to fulfill and question whether they can be expected to meet this ever expanding set of increasingly complex demands without adequate training, support, or compensation. At times the paraeducator is unfairly expected to do the work of a teacher—in such cases we wonder whether training is really the answer or whether other models of service delivery (e.g., hiring more qualified teachers, differentiating teacher roles) may be more appropriate. Third, we have been guided by the principles presented in the article *Developing a Shared Understanding: Paraeducator Supports for Students with Disabilities in General Education*

(Giangreco et al., 1999). This document lists a set of statements that reflect the shared understanding of the authors regarding paraeducator supports for students with disabilities in general education classes.

Intended Audience

This mini-course is intended for certified educators or teachers in training who do or will direct the work of paraeducators who support students with disabilities in general education settings. These educators include: (a) classroom teachers across all grade levels and subject areas, (b) special educators who support students with disabilities in general education classes, and (c) student teachers. The designations of "teacher" and "special educator" are meant to be used broadly. They can be interpreted to include a variety of individuals such as speech-language pathologists, librarians, preschool teachers, service learning coordinators, vocational teachers, or any other certified educational or related services professionals who are working with paraeducators to support students with disabilities.

The curriculum is meant to address the initial training needs of teachers and special educators working with students across the age-span and is generically applicable for those working with students who have various types of disabilities. It is primarily geared toward use in general education schools and classrooms, although the content is applicable to community or employment settings where students with disabilities are included with people who do not have disabilities. The nature of the course contents accounts for its use in urban, suburban, rural, and remote areas. But, like any training program, it should be tailored to meet local conditions.

Course Content and Organization

The mini-course *Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators* consists of four units of study, each designed to be completed in a 3-hour class for a total of 12 classroom hours. The units are:

Unit 1: Welcoming, Acknowledging and Orienting Paraeducators
Unit 2: Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities of Paraeducators and Other Team Members
Unit 3: Planning for Paraeducators
Unit 4: Communicating with Paraeducators and Providing Feedback

Ten hours of practicum activities are included in the mini-course that provide participants with some initial opportunities to apply what they have learned and begin practicing their skills. Each teacher or special educator is required to make arrangements to complete the 10 hours of the practicum with the support of the school principal. The principal's role is to be aware of the course activities and provide appropriate support to the teacher as needed.

The mini-course includes an Instructor's Manual and a Participant's Manual.

Basis for the Course

A number of foundational sources of information informed the development of this curriculum. They include:

- a review of published paraeducator literature (both data based and non-data based) from 1990-2001;
- a review of paraeducator/paraprofessional Dissertation Abstracts from 1992 - 1999;
- a national survey completed by a variety of stakeholder groups (e.g., parents, paraeducators, special educators, classroom teachers, related services providers, state education staff, and school administrators) about the perceived training needs and priorities for paraeducators and the educators who direct their work;
- input from a national advisory council made up of paraeducators, principals, students, parents, and state education personnel;
- input from teachers and special educators about the proposed curriculum;
- in-depth data (e.g., questionnaires, interviews, document reviews, and observations) generated from a model demonstration project that examined paraeducator issues in general education classrooms in Vermont; and
- initial field-testing of the course with public school teachers, special educators, and college students (at the student teaching level).

Formats of Training

The needs and circumstances of educators vary. Training formats must be flexible to meet those needs and circumstances, and therefore, the content included in this curriculum is designed to be offered in different formats. This course includes a Self-Assessment Preview and Review, unit overviews, readings, lesson plans that include class activities, a mechanism for evaluation, and practicum requirements. The course can be offered as inservice training with or without continuing education or university credit (1 credit).

Course Format

The traditional course format is based on face-to-face interactions between an instructor and course participants through traditional methods such as large and small group activities. This format can be provided in various ways. It can be delivered regionally or within a single district or school. It can be delivered in an intensive format (e.g., 2 or 3 day) or spread over 4 weeks (e.g., 3 hours per week). The course is not dependent on outside trainers and can be appropriately facilitated by a variety of qualified school personnel who have experience with paraeducators (e.g., principal, classroom teacher, special educator, or staff development specialist). Although different formats for learning the course content are available (e.g., self-study, distance learning), certain aspects of the traditional course format (e.g., meeting face to face with other teachers) can be difficult to replicate. We think that the traditional course format option generally is preferable. It can be offered to groups ranging from 5 to 20 participants. Depending on the delivery format selected, local trainers may be asked to do this training within the context of their existing job responsibilities or compensated for additional time spent beyond their contracted duties.

Formats Relying on Technology

Project staff are exploring the use of technology (e.g., interactive video, internet courses, and CD-ROM) as an option for offering this course to teachers and special educators who lack access to traditional courses because of issues such as scheduling conflicts or transportation barriers. As information becomes available about these options it will be posted on our web site, http://www.uvm.edu/~uapvt/paraprep/

Limitations of this Training Series

While this, and other training programs, can certainly assist schools in developing a more qualified workforce, it is not a magic wand, but merely one piece of the puzzle. No training program will solve all the problems related to service delivery, instruction, classroom management, and other important issues affecting student learning. This training program, like many programs, is brief and therefore focuses on a set of essential outcomes needed by teachers and special educators who work with paraeducators to support students with disabilities in general education settings. It does not replace the need for ongoing staff development, nor does it substitute for the daily and ongoing on-the-job support.

Other training resources are listed at this project's Web site at http://www.uvm.edu/~uapvt/paraprep/ and at a companion Web site at http://www.uvm.edu/~uapvt/parasupport/

References

Giangreco, M.F., CichoskiKelly, E., Backus, L., Edelman, S., Broer, S., Tucker, P., CichoskiKelly, C., & Spinney, P. (March 1999). Developing a shared understanding: Paraeducator supports for students with disabilities in general education. *TASH Newsletter, 25* (3), 21-23.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997. Pub. L. No. 105-17, Section 20, 111 Stat. 37 (1997).

Make It Your Own!

In offering these training materials for your use, we have provided a level of detail so that you can have all that is necessary to offer a basic course (e.g., agendas with timelines, readings, activities, overhead masters, and lists of supplemental resources). At the same time, we recognize that some of you may be experienced instructors who may not need the level of detail we have provided. In such situations we encourage you to make adjustments that make sense to you.

Bringing chocolate to the first class can't hurt!

We strongly encourage you to bring your own style of teaching to this course. Feel free to modify or substitute activities to match the objectives. Feel free to add readings that would improve the content. Insert your favorite stories, cartoons, or other training materials. Bringing chocolate to the first class can't hurt!

If your experience is anything like ours, you'll find yourself adding your own personal touches and making various adjustments in preparation for class and during class. Often the adjustments you make will depend on the number of participants and the dynamics of the group. For example, sometimes you may decide that activities designed to be done in small groups are more appropriate for large groups. Sometimes the length of time you devote to an activity may be shortened or extended. You will find yourself assisting participants in making connections between the course content and what you are learning about their schools and classrooms. This likely will lead to discussion of important topics that are beyond the scope of a unit's objectives. Hopefully, this will help make the course more relevant and dynamic.

The main point is to take the framework offered in these materials and make it your own!

Good luck!

How to Use this Instructor's Manual

This manual includes all of the information that an instructor needs to prepare for, deliver, and evaluate the *Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators* mini-course. Depending on the organization (e.g., school district, state education agency, institution of higher education), it is likely that a group, which may or may not include the eventual mini-course instructor, first decides to offer the course based on identified needs. Listed below is some information to consider:

How to Offer the Training

1. **Decide whether there is a need to offer the course:**
    - Need can be determined by reviewing state training needs (e.g., data from a state education department's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development, data collected by state paraeducator advocacy organizations) and/or local training needs (observations or surveys conducted by school districts to identify teacher/special educator training needs).

2. **Choose the format for the course:**
    - Determine (based on identified needs) whether the course will be available to students through open-enrollment or in-house.
    - Open-enrollment courses may be delivered by school districts (that are open to teachers/special educators from other schools), colleges or universities, or agencies (e.g., the state Department of Education) that are interested in offering a training which is open to the public.
    - In-house courses will generally be offered by a school district that is interested in providing this learning experience for their own staff.

3. **Identify a qualified instructor for the course:**
    - The course is designed so that an administrator, staff development specialist, teacher, or special educator who is reasonably experienced in working with paraeducators could deliver it.
    - The instructor should be familiar with the work of paraeducators, and may be a professional such as a classroom teacher, special educator, administrator, consultant, or staff development specialist.
    - An instructor who works in the setting could teach an in-house course.
    - Once the instructor has been identified, he/she should be provided with both the Instructor's Manual and the Participant's Manual for the course.
    - There may be additional instructor qualifications required by colleges and universities when the course is offered for credit.

4. **Decide whether the course will be offered for credit or non-credit and determine the cost to the participant, if any:**
   - The course may be offered as a non-credit course with a certificate of completion awarded to participants upon completion of requirements. Consideration will need to be given to whether participants will have to pay tuition if there is a cost for the instructor or other components (e.g., materials, classroom space). In some cases, the instructor may be a member of the school district who teaches the course as part of his/her job responsibilities. In other cases, schools may pay in-house instructors for work beyond their contracted duties or hire someone from outside the system. In such cases, the course may be offered to participants at no cost if the school assumes the cost.
   - Arrangements can be made with local colleges and universities to offer the course for credit (the course is designed as a one-credit course). Courses that are offered for credit may also require students to pay tuition. Arrangements must then be made with the college or university to determine tuition rates for participants.

5. **Schedule the course:**
   Scheduling the course will depend on several factors, including:
   - the instructor's availability and schedule;
   - the availability of participants;
   - the availability of training sites; and
   - the schedule of confirmed dates, times, and locations for all course classes.

6. **Advertise the course:**
   - Once the schedule for the course has been determined, the course should be advertised to prospective participants.
   - The advertisement should contain information regarding the course schedule, course content, and practicum requirements, as well as information about how to register and where registration forms can be obtained.
   - The advertisement may consist of a brochure, flier, or e-mail message (a sample course announcement is found in the *Forms* section at the end of the Instructor's Manual).
   - In-house: Distribute to school principals, special education coordinators, special educators, classroom teachers, and other appropriate school personnel.
   - Open-enrollment: Distribute to teacher organizations, special education coordinators, parent-teacher organizations, local newspapers (the advertisement section), and others.
   - Arrangements should also be made to advertise in college and university course catalogues and bulletins if the course is offered for credit.

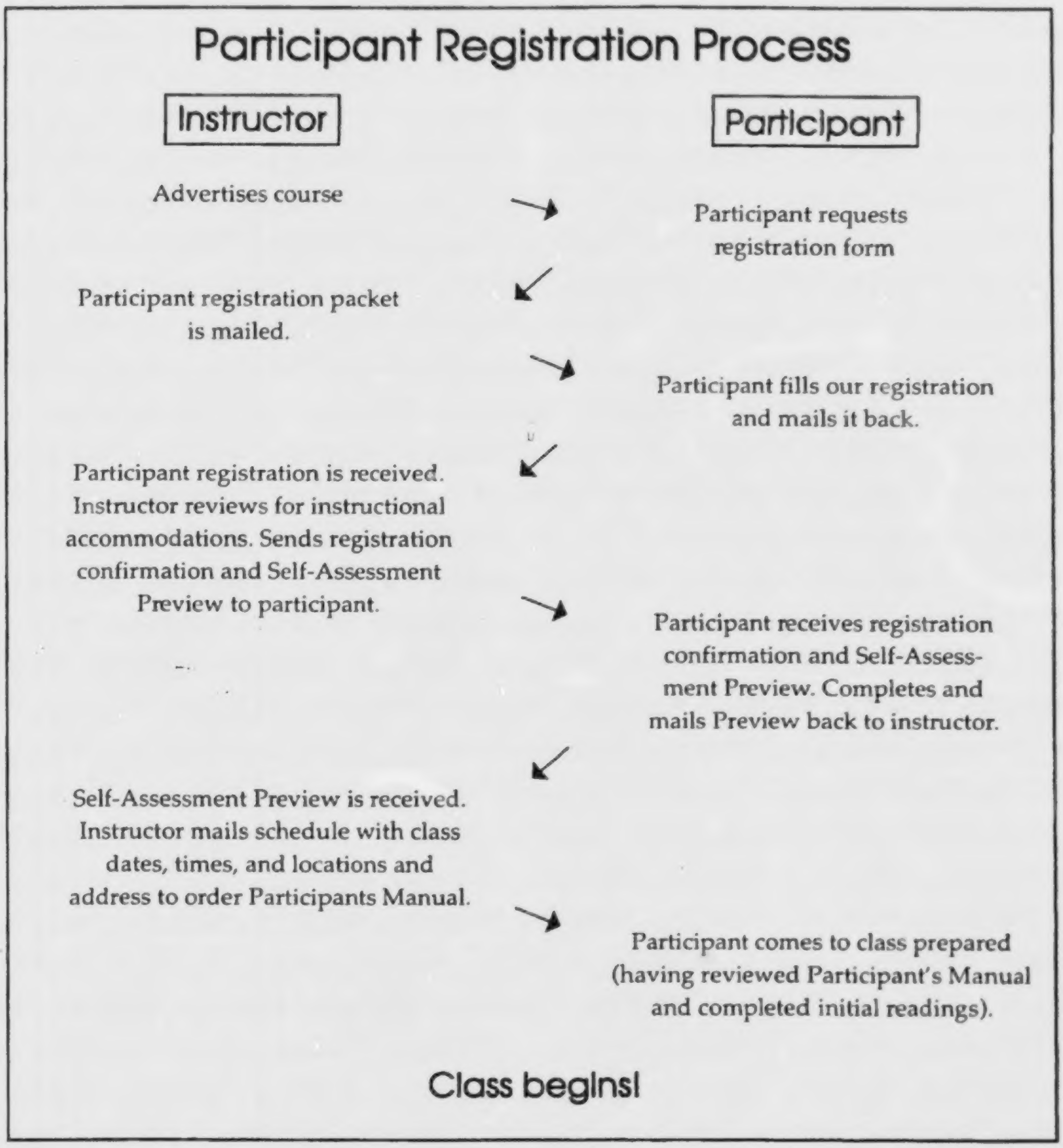
7. **Register students:**
   At this point in the process instructors may begin to have some involvement in the logistics of offering the course.
   - Participants must complete the registration form for the course and submit it. The registration form is found in the *Forms* section at the end of the Instructor's Manual. The participant registration form includes a sign-off from the principal in the school where the practicum requirements will be completed.
   - Upon receipt, the registration form should be reviewed by the instructor for any necessary instructional accommodations and kept in a confidential place.
   - Once participants have returned their registration, they should be supplied with a Participant Course Information Sheet which lists all pertinent information such as a schedule of class dates, times, and locations and the address for ordering the Participant's Manual (order # 650.049B) from the National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials (NCRTM) at:

     NCRTM
     Oklahoma State University
     5202 Richmond Hill Drive
     Stillwater, OK 74078-4080

     800-223-5219 (toll free)
     405-624-7650 (phone)
     405-624-3156 (TDD)
     405-624-0695 (fax)
     www.nchrtm.okstate.edu

     Order # 650.049B

   - For courses offered in-house, school districts may wish to pre-order the Participant's Manuals for distribution. The NCRTM provides materials on a nonprofit, cost-recovery basis.
   - For courses offered at colleges and universities, bulk orders may be made through the college bookstore.



Participant Registration Process

Instructor

Advertises course

Participant registration packet is mailed.

Participant registration is received. Instructor reviews for instructional accommodations. Sends registration confirmation and Self-Assessment Preview to participant.

Self-Assessment Preview is received. Instructor mails schedule with class dates, times, and locations and address to order Participants Manual.

Participant

Participant requests registration form

Participant fills our registration and mails it back.

Participant receives registration confirmation and Self-Assessment Preview. Completes and mails Preview back to instructor.

Participant comes to class prepared (having reviewed Participant's Manual and completed initial readings).

Class begins!

How to Use the Instructional Units

The first step recommended to the instructor is to *review both the Instructor's and the Participant's Manuals* in order to become familiar with the readings, lessons, activities, and all other aspects of the training materials. The Instructor's Manual includes four instructional units. Each unit contains:

- an overview
- an agenda
- a lesson plan
- overhead masters

Practicum requirements pertaining to each unit of the course are located in the *Forms* section of the Participant's Manual. For each unit there are three practicum activity options. *Participants must select and complete at least two activities for each unit, for a total of eight practicum activities.* Participants may suggest individually appropriate alternate practicum activities that match the unit objectives. Alternate practicum activities must be approved by the instructor in advance of completion.

1. **How to use the overviews:**
   The overviews should be used to help the instructor prepare for each unit. They include the following components:
   - a brief description of the unit
   - the hours of instruction
   - the unit objectives
   - the unit materials
   - instructor preparation (e.g., of materials and overheads)
   - participant preparation (e.g., reading required readings)
   - instructor implementation
   - practicum requirement overview
   - evaluation of participant learning
   - suggested supplemental resources
   - The suggested supplemental resources extend beyond the scope of the unit. They are provided for participants who wish to have more information than what is provided in the required readings.

2. **How to use the agendas:**
   - The agendas are included in the Instructor's Manual only.
   - The agendas should be used to help the instructor organize and plan time requirements for delivery of unit content and activities.
   - The agendas should be kept on hand during class to help the instructor keep on schedule.
   - The agendas may be copied prior to class and distributed to the participants at the beginning of each class as organizers.

3. **How to use the lesson plans:**
   - The Instructor's Manual (only) includes lessons for each unit.
   - The lesson plans should be used to guide the instructor through the class and, therefore, should be reviewed prior to each class.
   - The lesson plans are cross-referenced to the agenda for each unit (each agenda item is noted with the stylized letter **A**).

- The lesson plans contain various icons to help the instructor visually recognize different parts of the lesson, as follows:

Note to the Instructor: Signals the instructor that there are special directions that should be reviewed prior to class and used during class as a reminder.

Activity: Signals the instructor to begin a class activity.

Refer to Participant's Manual: Signals the instructor to refer the participants to materials in their Participant's Manual (e.g., required readings).

Show Overhead: Signals the instructor to show an overhead during the class.

BREAK: Signals the instructor to call for a class break.

Discussion Questions: Signals the instructor to begin a class discussion.

Read Aloud: Signals the instructor to read the information to the class.

Self-Assessment Preview and Review: Signals the instructor to have participants complete the Self-Assessment Preview at the end of Unit 1 and the Self-Assessment Review at the end of Unit 4.

- The lesson plans are designed to be taught according to the sequence presented.
- Lessons include review of the required readings through specific activities and discussion questions *(the instructor should note that the required readings are contained in the Participant's Manual only).*
- The Participant's Manual contains Activity Sheets for each unit, which correspond to the Lesson Plan Activities in the Instructor's Manual.

- The instructor should note that the Participant's Manual contains some information from required readings that is not covered in class.
- Time frames for each activity and discussion are given in the lesson as well as on the agenda.
- The instructor should monitor class time to ensure that all planned activities will be completed.
- The instructor may wish to supplement or substitute readings, activities, or discussion questions as he or she feels is appropriate.

NOTE: Although this course has been designed as a complete package of materials and activities, instructors are encouraged to tailor readings and activities to match local needs and the availability of updated information. The inclusion of high levels of detail in the course materials is meant to assist the instructor, not to limit the instructor's flexibility in individualizing the course to match participants' needs.

4. **How to use the Participant's Manual in class:**
   - The required readings are located only in the Participant's Manual; therefore, the instructor will need both the Instructor's Manual and the Participant's Manual for class activities.
   - The instructor will be directed to refer participants to the Participant's Manual, which contains the Required Readings and Activity Sheets needed to complete in-class activities.
   - The instructor should bring a copy of the Participant's Manual to each class and remind students to do the same.

5. **How to use Participant Unit Evaluation Forms:**
   - Participant Unit Evaluation forms are found in the *Forms* section of the Participant's manual. The instructor should make copies of the forms for distribution at the end of each unit.
   - These forms are used to give the instructor of the course feedback about the training materials, unit content, and instructional methods.
   - The instructor should distribute these forms at the end of each class to be completed by participants prior to their departure from class.
   - The instructor should gather all evaluation forms and review them for suggestions that may lead to revisions of future units or course offerings.

6. **How to use the Practicum Requirement Checklists:**

- The instructor should review with the participants the practicum requirements for each unit at the end of each class.
- The instructor should ensure that all participants understand the requirements (e.g., participants must complete at least two practicum activities for each unit).

- Participants should be encouraged to complete the practicum requirements in a time frame that fits their work schedule; however, *all* practicum requirements must be completed in the time frame negotiated by the instructor and the class.
- Because some participants may not begin working on the practicum requirements until the course has been completed (e.g., because it was offered as a summer institute), it is important for the instructor to ensure that participants understand the requirements and have a plan for completion.
- Participants who feel that certain practicum requirements are not appropriate for their school site may propose more suitable requirements. Alternate practicum activities must be approved by the instructor in advance of completion.
- Participants are responsible for turning in the completed practicum checklists to the instructor at the end of class, within one week after the completion of the practicum requirements.

7. **How to issue the Certificate of Completion:**

- When a participant has completed the mini-course *Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators,* including the practicum requirements, the instructor issues the participant a Certificate of Completion (located in the *Forms* section at the end of the Instructor's Manual).
- Completion of the coursework includes attending all classes, participating in class activities, completing the Self-Assessment Review, providing unit evaluation feedback, and fulfilling all practicum requirements.

Unit 1

Welcoming, Acknowledging and Orienting Paraeducators

Instructor's Overview

Unit 1: Welcoming, Acknowledging and Orienting Paraeducators

Brief Description of Unit

The purpose of this unit is to provide information about and strategies for welcoming, acknowledging, and orienting paraeducators who support the education of students with disabilities in general education settings. This unit is based on the assumption that teachers and special educators already know how important it is to welcome, acknowledge, and orient paraeducators who work in their classrooms. Therefore, this unit will focus on readings and activities designed to assist teachers and special educators in assessing what they already do related to these areas so that they can address self-identified needs and share currently used approaches with other teachers in the class.

Hours of Instruction (In class format)

3 hours

Unit Objectives

Key: K = Knowledge, S = Skill (Knowledge objectives are addressed through readings and class activities; skill objectives are addressed through practicum activities.)

1. Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will be able to articulate the importance of welcoming, acknowledging, and orienting paraeducators. (K)
2. Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will develop a variety of strategies for welcoming and acknowledging paraeducators. (K)
3. Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will identify specific information that should be part of orienting paraeducators to the school, classroom, and students with whom they will be working. (K)
4. Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will demonstrate skills welcoming, acknowledging, and orienting paraeducators to the school, classroom, and students. (S)

Preparing for and Implementing the Unit

Required Readings (located only in the Participant's Manual)

Doyle, M.B., & Lee, P.A. (1997). Creating partnerships with paraprofessionals. In M.F. Giangreco (Ed.). *Quick-guides to inclusion: Ideas for educating students with disabilities* (excerpts from pp. 57-83). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Giangreco, M.F. (April 2000). Supporting paraprofessionals in general education classrooms: What teachers can do. *I-Team News.* Center on Disability and Community Inclusion, University of Vermont, pp. 10-11.

Giangreco, M.F., CichoskiKelly, E., Backus, L., Edelman, S.W., Tucker, P., Broer, S., CichoskiKelly, C., & Spinney, P. (1999, March). Developing a shared understanding: Paraeducator supports for students with disabilities in general education. *TASH Newsletter, 25* (3), 21-23.

Giangreco, M.F., Edelman, S.W., & Broer, S.M. (2001). Respect, appreciation, and acknowledgment of paraprofessionals who support students with disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 67, 485-498.

Instructor Materials:

- overhead projector and screen
- Unit 1 overhead masters (must be copied onto transparencies)
- flip charts and markers
- masking tape
- nametags
- enough copies of the Self-Assessment Preview (located in *Forms* section of this manual) and Unit 1 evaluation form (located in the *Forms* section of the Participant's Manual) to distribute to each member of the class.

Instructor Preparation for Unit 1:

- Obtain a list of students registered for the class.
- Plan for any student accommodations identified on the registration forms.
- Read required readings (located only in the Participant's Manual) prior to class.
- Gather all instructor materials.
- Consider the physical arrangement of the classroom to facilitate class activities.
- Become knowledgeable about facilities (e.g., restrooms, food, parking).
- Review practicum requirements for Unit 1.

Participant Preparation for Unit 1:

- Read the required readings **prior to class**.
- Based on required readings, write two questions that are relevant to you or your situation for discussion in class.
- Bring writing materials for note-taking to class.
- Bring your Participant's Manual to class.
- Review the practicum requirements for Unit 1.

Instructor Implementation of Unit 1:

The unit includes an agenda with timelines, lesson plan, required readings, and practicum requirements to be completed in the educational setting. The agenda is located at the beginning of the unit. The activities are interspersed within the lesson plan.

Practicum Requirements

Participants are encouraged to complete the unit's practicum activities each week, between class meetings if possible. Participants must complete at least two of the practicum requirements for Unit 1. Practicum activities must be completed within the time frame negotiated by the instructor and the class. An accompanying practicum checklist of the activities is found in the Participant's Manual. In the event that a practicum requirement is not appropriate for the professional's specific situation, alternate activities may be substituted based on negotiation with the instructor. The completed practicum checklist must be submitted to the instructor along with corresponding evidence of completed practicum activities.

Evaluation of Participant Learning

Participants are evaluated in three ways: (1) Self-Assessment Review (to be completed after the last class session), (2) attendance and participation in class activities, and (3) completion of practicum requirements.

Suggested Supplemental Resources

Books and Articles

Doyle, M.B. (1997). *The paraprofessional's guide to the inclusive classroom: Working as a team.* Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes. (Updated version due out in 2002.)

Friend, M., & Cook, L. (1996). *Interaction: Collaborative skills for school professionals (2nd ed.),* New York: Longman.

Giangreco, M.F., Broer, S.M., & Edelman, S.W. (1999). The tip of the iceberg: Determining whether paraprofessional support is needed for students with disabilities in general education settings. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 24,* 281-291.

Pickett, A.L., & Gerlach, K. (1997). *Supervising paraeducators in school settings: A team approach.* Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

Pugach, M., & Johnson, L.J. (1995). *Collaborative practitioners: Collaborative schools.* Denver: Love.

Rainforth, B., & York-Barr, J. (1997). *Collaborative teams for students with severe disabilities: Integrated therapy and educational services (2nd ed.),* Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Web Sites

Paraeducator Support: www.uvm.edu/~uapvt/parasupport/
(see link: Paraeducator Web sites)

Agenda

Unit 1: Welcoming, Acknowledging, and Orienting Paraeducators (3 hours)

	Agenda Item	Time
A1.	Getting Started	25 min.
	Introductions and Ground Rules Self-Assessment Preview	
A2.	Welcoming and Acknowledging Paraeducators	65 min.
	Introduce Objective 1 (2 min.) Welcome Letter Activity (25 min.) Introduce Objective 2 (3 min.) Welcoming and Acknowledging (35 min.)	
A3.	BREAK	15 min.
A4.	Orienting Paraeducators	45 min.
	Introduce Objective 3 (2 min.) Orientation Activity (18 min.) Large-Group Sharing (25 min.)	
A5.	Review of Reading Discussion Questions	20 min
A6.	Review of Practicum and Unit Evaluation	10 min.

Lesson Plan

Unit 1: Welcoming, Acknowledging, and Orienting Paraeducators

Note to the Instructor

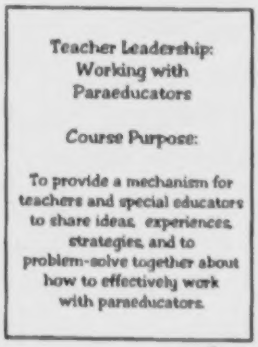
As participants arrive at the class, they should be asked to write their names on nametags and wear them during the class. The instructor should already be wearing a nametag. (Handing out chocolate never hurt!)

A1 GETTING STARTED (25 min.)

Introductions and Ground Rules Activity

1. Introduce yourself (name and role as instructor as well as describing your collaboration with paraeducators).
2. Ask everyone to introduce themselves and explain their roles (e.g., teacher, special educator) and describe their collaboration with paraeducators (e.g., "I work with a paraeducator in my class who supports a student with disabilities.").
3. Introduce the purpose of the mini-course.

Show Overhead (TL 1-1)



Teacher Leadership:
Working with
Paraeducators

Course Purpose:

To provide a mechanism for
teachers and special educators
to share ideas, experiences,
strategies, and to
problem-solve together about
how to effectively work
with paraeducators.

TL 1-1

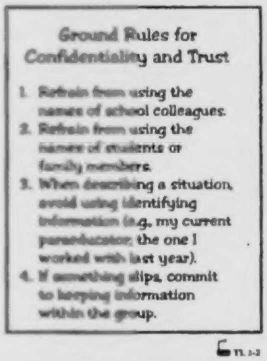
Read Aloud

The purpose of the mini-course Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators, *is to provide a mechanism for teachers and special educators to share ideas, experiences, strategies, and to problem-solve together about how to effectively work with paraeducators.*

Note to the Instructor

To establish trust among participants to share openly, it is important to maintain the confidentiality of our paraeducator, teacher, and special educator colleagues.

Show Overhead (TL 1-2)



Ground Rules for Confidentiality and Trust

1. Refrain from using the names of school colleagues.
2. Refrain from using the names of students or family members.
3. When describing a situation, avoid using identifying information (e.g., my current paraeducator, the one I worked with last year).
4. If something slips, commit to keeping information within the group.

TL 1-2

Read Aloud

Throughout this class the success of the experience will be dependent, in part, upon open and honest sharing of ideas among group members. Therefore, it is vital that we establish some ground rules for confidentiality that will help members feel comfortable sharing. Let's review these initial ground rules (on the overhead) as a group and then decide if we need to modify or add to them, so that people are comfortable sharing while maintaining confidentiality.

Note to the Instructor

Review overhead points and reach group agreement about confidentiality norms. Encourage people to talk about their experiences in hypothetical terms (even though they may not be hypothetical).

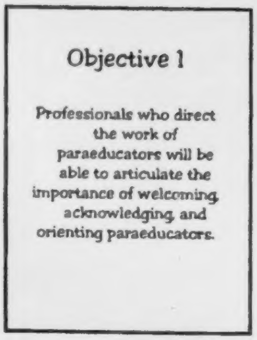
Self-Assessment Preview

If the Self-Assessment Preview was not completed prior to the first class, follow steps 1-3 below. If it was completed and collected prior to the course's starting date, use this time to discuss the Self-Assessment Preview, areas of self-identified need, the importance of self-assessment and reflection to good teaching, and to respond to questions.

1. Distribute the Self-Assessment Preview forms to each participant.
2. Review the instructions and have participants complete it.
3. Collect all Self-Assessment Previews. These can be compared to the Self-Assessment Review which will be completed at the end of the course.

A2 WELCOMING AND ACKNOWLEDGING PARAEDUCATORS (65 min.)

Show Overhead (TL 1-3)



Objective 1

Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will be able to articulate the importance of welcoming, acknowledging, and orienting paraeducators.

TL 1-3

Read Aloud

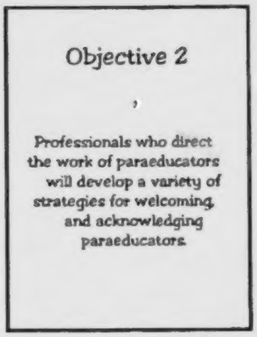
Objective 1: Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will be able to articulate the importance of welcoming, acknowledging, and orienting paraeducators.

Welcome Letter Activity (25 min.)

1. Arrange the participants in groups of in two or three. Have participants assume group roles (e.g., facilitator, recorder, reporter).
2. Ask the participants to think about positive experiences they have had working with paraeducators and to **generate a written list** of thoughts about why paraeducators are important, how they contribute to the classroom, how they make one's job better, and how they make a difference. (5 min.)
3. Then devote 10 minutes to large-group sharing of thoughts that were generated in the small groups. Call on each group to report on its written list of thoughts about why paraeducators are important. (10 min.)
4. Use the final 10 minutes to have participants each write a letter of appreciation to a paraeducator with whom they work. The letters should be designed to welcome the paraeducators to the classroom and school, acknowledge their importance, and express appreciation for their work. Given that participants may have been working with the paraeducators for varying amounts of time, the letters should be individualized to match the situation.

Note: If some participants do not presently have a paraeducator to whom they can write a real letter of appreciation, they should write the letter to a fantasy paraeducator. Those participants should imagine that they have the world's best paraeducator and write to that person.

Show Overhead (TL 1-4)



Objective 2

Professionals who direct
the work of paraeducators
will develop a variety of
strategies for welcoming,
and acknowledging
paraeducators.

TL 1-4

Read Aloud

Objective 2: Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will develop a variety of strategies for welcoming and acknowledging paraeducators.

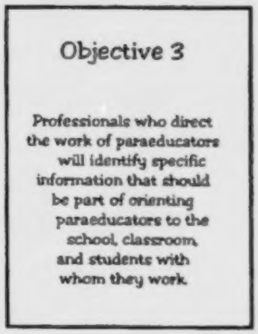
Welcoming and Acknowledging Activity (35 min.)

1. Arrange participants in groups of approximately five members each and give them some large chart paper and markers. Have participants assume group roles (e.g., facilitator, recorder, reporter). (2 min.)
2. Ask groups to spend 8 minutes in a round-robin format sharing ideas of things they have actually done or have seen others do to welcome paraeducators in their classroom or acknowledge their importance and value. As many ideas as possible should be recorded on the chart paper.
3. During this time, each group may send a "friendly spy" (only one at a time) to see what other groups have listed and add any of their ideas to the list.
4. After 10 min. give all participants 3 min. to move about to look at each other's lists.
5. Then reconvene the groups and ask participants to defer judgment (don't judge the ideas, just list them) and stretch beyond the obvious to generate a written list of more examples of welcoming and acknowledging paraeducators that are not on their current list. The emphasis is on developing a large quantity of ideas (wild ideas are encouraged since they might spur other, more useable ideas). No friendly spying is allowed during this segment of the activity. (7 min.)
6. Facilitates large-group sharing of each group's best ideas. Ask each group's reporter to share a few of their best ideas. (10 min.)
7. Have each participant select at least three ideas she or he would like to implement and will commit to carrying out for the practicum with at least one paraeducator. Participants should use the Welcoming/Acknowledging Activity Sheet (located in the Participant's Manual) to clarify what they intend to do, for whom it will be done, when it will be done, and what preparation (if any) is required. (5 min.)
8. Inform the participants that the lists created during the activity will be compiled, copied, and distributed at the next class session.

A3 BREAK (15 min.)

A4 ORIENTING PARAEDUCATORS (45 min.)

Show Overhead (TL 1-5)



Objective 3

Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will identify specific information that should be part of orienting paraeducators to the school, classroom, and students with whom they work.

TL 1-5

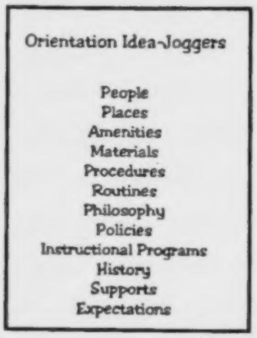
Read Aloud

Objective 3: Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will identify specific information that should be part of orienting paraeducators to the school, classroom, and students with whom they work.

Orientation Activity

1. Ask participants to form three groups of approximately equal size and provide each group with chart paper and markers. If too much time is being lost in forming groups, simple strategies can be used, such as having people count off by threes or asking people to form a group that has a new configuration of participants. Instructors should use discretion in grouping. Have participants assume group roles (e.g., facilitator, recorder, reporter).
2. Ask the groups to refer to the Activity Sheet in their Participant's Manuals titled *Categories of Orientation for Paraeducators.*
3. Assign each group one of the three categories: School, Classroom, Student(s). Run this activity as a jigsaw, in which each group will be dependent on the other groups to generate and share their work. Give them 18 minutes to discuss, organize, and record the kinds of things to which paraeducators need to be oriented.

Show Overhead (TL 1-6)



Orientation Idea-Joggers

People
Places
Amenities
Materials
Procedures
Routines
Philosophy
Policies
Instructional Programs
History
Supports
Expectations

TL 1-6

Read Aloud

When identifying what paraeducators need to be oriented to in your situation, consider some of the ideas listed on the overhead.

4. Have the groups record their work on chart paper (saving the Activity Worksheet for individual use during the practicum).
5. Tell the groups that after they have spent about 12 minutes generating a list, they should spend the last 6 minutes organizing their work into a sequence that makes sense to them.
6. Give each group an equal amount of time to share their work and to discuss with the large group any issues pertaining to the orientation of paraeducators.
7. Collect the chart papers for compilation, copying, and distribution at the next class session.

A5 REVIEW OF READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (20 min.)

Discussion Questions

Ask participants to refer to the questions they prepared for the class, based on the readings for the unit. Ask participants to pose their questions, and then respond and/or invite participants to respond.

Note to the Instructor

If the participants are reluctant to ask questions, ask for the questions to be handed to you. Then select some of the questions to read aloud (without mentioning the name of the person asking) to facilitate the discussion.

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Refer to the Participant's Manual

Unit 2 Readings

At the end of the discussion session, remind the participants that the Unit 2 readings should be read prior to the next class meeting and at least two questions should be written in preparation for class discussion.

A6 REVIEW OF PRACTICUM AND UNIT EVALUATION (10 min.)

Refer to the Participant's Manual

Practicum Requirements Section

1. Review the practicum requirements for Unit 1.
   Ask the participants to refer to their Participant's Manual and review the three practicum requirements:
   - Welcoming interview
   - Welcoming/acknowledging gestures
   - Orientation of paraeducators

   Remind participants that they must complete at least two of the list requirements. Tell them that they may also propose alternatives that are individually appropriate given their situation. Tell them that any alternative practicum activities must be approved by the instructor in advance of completion.
2. Distribute Unit 1 evaluation forms and ask participants to complete and turn in before leaving class.

Overhead Masters for Unit 1:

Welcoming, Acknowledging and Orienting Paraeducators

Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators

Course Purpose:

To provide a mechanism for teachers and special educators to share ideas, experiences, strategies, and to problem-solve together about how to effectively work with paraeducators.

Ground Rules for Confidentiality and Trust

1. Refrain from using the names of school colleagues.
2. Refrain from using the names of students or family members.
3. When describing a situation, avoid using identifying information (e.g., my current paraeducator; the one I worked with last year).
4. If something slips, commit to keeping information within the group.

Objective 1

Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will be able to articulate the importance of welcoming, acknowledging, and orienting paraeducators.

TL 1-3

Objective 2

Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will develop a variety of strategies for welcoming, and acknowledging paraeducators.

Objective 3

Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will identify specific information that should be part of orienting paraeducators to the school, classroom, and students with whom they work.

TL 1-5

Orientation Idea-Joggers

People
Places
Amenities
Materials
Procedures
Routines
Philosophy
Policies
Instructional Programs
History
Supports
Expectations

TL 1-6

Unit 2

Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities of Paraeducators and Other Team Members

Instructor's Overview

Unit 2: Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities of Paraeducators and Other Team Members

Brief Description of Unit

The purpose of this unit is to provide information about and strategies for clarifying the roles of paraeducators who support the education of students with disabilities in general education settings and those who direct their work (e.g., teachers, special educators, related services providers).

Hours of Instruction (in class format)

3 hours

Unit Objectives

Key: K = Knowledge, S = Skill (Knowledge objectives are addressed through readings and class activities; skill objectives are addressed through practicum activities.)

1. Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will understand the roles and responsibilities of paraeducators. (K)
2. Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will know about areas of role controversy regarding paraeducators. (K)
3. Professionals will understand the roles of teachers, special educators, and related services providers in directing the work of paraeducators. (K)
4. Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will demonstrate skills clarifying the roles of paraeducators and their own roles with the educational program. (S)

Preparing for and Implementing the Unit

Required Readings (located only in the Participant's Manual)

CichoskiKelly, E. (2000). *Roles and responsibilities of paraeducators and other team members.* Unpublished manuscript, Burlington, VT: University of Vermont, Center on Disability and Community Inclusion.

Giangreco, M.F., Edelman, S.W., Luiselli, T.E., & MacFarland, S.Z.C. (1997). Helping or hovering: Effects of instructional assistant proximity on students with disabilities. *Exceptional Children,* 64, 7-18.

Instructor Materials:
- overhead projector and screen
- overhead masters (must be copied onto transparencies)
- flip charts and markers
- masking tape
- nametags
- enough copies of the Unit 2 evaluation form (located in the *Forms* section of the Participant's Manual) to distribute to each member of the class

Instructor Preparation for Unit 2:
- Read the required readings (located only in the Participant's Manual) prior to the class.
- Compile the welcoming and acknowledging ideas generated in class to be copied for distribution in the next class. This compilation should consist of a verbatim listing of the ideas generated by the class.
- Compile the three sets of orientation information (i.e., orientation to the school, the classroom, the students) on the Activity Sheet titled Categories of Orientation for Paraeducators (found in the Participant's Manual).
- Gather all instructor materials.
- Consider the physical arrangement of the classroom to facilitate class activities.
- Review the practicum requirements for Unit 2.

Participant Preparation for Unit 2:
- Read the required readings **prior to class.**
- Based on required readings, write two questions that are relevant to you or your situation for discussion in class.
- Bring writing materials for note-taking to class.
- Bring your Participant's Manual to class.
- Review the practicum requirements for Unit 2.

Instructor Implementation of Unit 2:
This unit includes an agenda with timelines, lesson plan, required readings, and practicum requirements to be completed in the educational setting. The agenda is located at the beginning of the unit. The activities are interspersed within the lesson plan.

Practicum Requirements

Participants are encouraged to complete the unit's practicum activities each week, between class meetings if possible. Participants must complete at least two of the practicum requirements for Unit 2. Practicum activities must be completed in the time frame negotiated by the instructor and the class. An accompanying practicum checklist of the activities is found in the Participant's Manual. In the event that a practicum requirement is not appropriate for the professional's specific situation, alternate activities may be substituted based on negotiation with the instructor. The completed practicum checklist must be submitted to the instructor along with corresponding evidence of completed practicum activities.

Evaluation of Participant Learning

Participants are evaluated in three ways: (1) Self-Assessment Review (to be completed after the last class session), (2) attendance and participation in class activities, and (3) completion of practicum requirements.

Suggested Supplemental Resources

Books and Articles

Erwin, E. (1996). Meaningful participation in early childhood general education: Exploring the use of natural supports and adaptive strategies. *Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness, 90,* 400-411.

Fletcher-Campbell, F. (1992). How can we use an extra pair of hands? *British Journal of Special Education, 19*(4), 141-143.

French, N. (1998). Working together: Resource teachers and paraeducators. *Remedial and Special Education, 19,* 357-368.

Giangreco, M.F., Edelman, S.E., Broer, S.M., & Doyle, M.B. (2001). Paraprofessional support of students with disabilities: Literature from the past decade. *Exceptional Children, 68,* 46-64.

National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities. (1999, March). Learning disabilities: Use of paraprofessionals. *Asha,* 41 (Suppl. 19), 37-46. Online at http://www.ldonline.org/njcld/paraprof298.html

Web Sites

National Clearinghouse for Paraeducator Resources
http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/CMMR/Clearinghouse.html

National Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services
http://web.gc.cuny.edu/dept/case/nrcp/

Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium
http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/para/

Agenda

Unit 2: Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities of Paraeducators and Other Team Members (3 hours)

	Agenda Item	Time
A1.	Unfinished Business	10 min.
A2.	Roles of Paraeducators Introduce Objective 1 (2 min.) Paraeducator Roles Activity (28 min.)	30 min.
A3.	Role Controversies Introduce Objective 2 (2 min.) Paraeducator Role Controversies Activity (33 min.)	35 min.
A4.	BREAK	15 min.
	Role Controversies continued (2 min.) Helping or Hovering Activity (28 min.)	30 min.
A5.	Roles of Professionals Directing the Work of Paraeducators Introduce Objective 3 (2 min.) Professional Roles Activity (28 min.)	30 min.
A6.	Review of Reading Discussion Questions	20 min.
A7.	Review of Practicum and Unit Evaluation	10 min.

Note to the Instructor

As participants arrive at the class, they should be asked to wear nametags in class to facilitate collaborative group activities. The instructor should already be wearing a nametag.

A1 UNFINISHED BUSINESS (10 min.)

Note to the Instructor

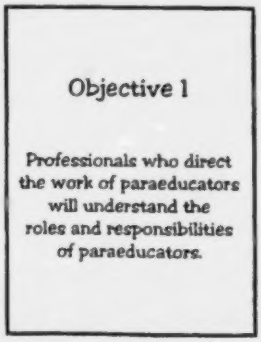
Hand out the compiled lists generated at the first class meeting: (1) the welcoming and acknowledging ideas, and (2) the orientation categories information.

Ask the participants to take a moment to review the handouts. Then ask if anyone has questions about the handouts or pertaining to the previous unit's content (welcoming, acknowledging, and orienting paraeducators).

Encourage participants to respond to questions in addition to responding yourself.

A2 ROLES OF PARAEDUCATORS (30 min.)

Show Overhead (TL 2-1)



Objective 1

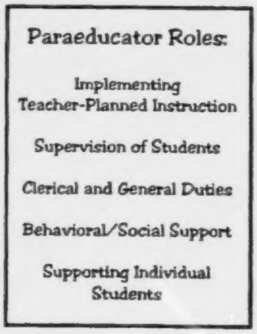
Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will understand the roles and responsibilities of paraeducators.

TL 2-1

Read Aloud

Objective 1: Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will understand the roles and responsibilities of paraeducators.

Show Overhead (TL 2-2)



Paraeducator Roles:

Implementing Teacher-Planned Instruction

Supervision of Students

Clerical and General Duties

Behavioral/Social Support

Supporting Individual Students

Read Aloud

As we proceed with the following activity, I will be relying upon the examples of the roles listed on the overhead that were in your reading titled "Information about Roles and Responsibilities." Are there any other responsibilities that do not fall into one of the listed categories that we should add?

Note to the Instructor

If participants suggest roles that fit under any of the categories that are controversial (e.g., assessment, instructional planning, adapting curriculum, designing accommodations, communicating with families), indicate that those suggestions will be addressed later in an activity about controversial roles. Otherwise, clarify where suggestions might fit under existing categories or add new categories.

Refer to the Participant's Manual

Unit 2 Activity Sheet: Paraeducator Roles

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Paraeducator Roles Activity (28 min.)

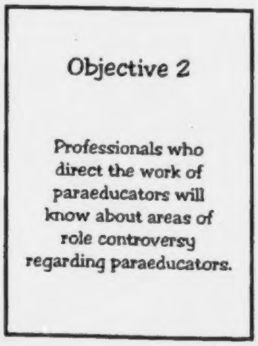
1. Ask participants to form groups of three or four members and assume group roles (e.g., facilitator, recorder, reporter).
2. Although the participants are arranged in groups, the first part of the activity is to be completed individually by each participant. Explain that participants will be given 6 minutes to complete the portion of the Paraeducator Roles Activity sheet (2 pages) labeled "To be completed individually." For each listed category, ask each person to write examples of what the paraeducators in his or her class actually do, an estimate of what percent of time they spend doing it, and an estimate of the ideal amount of time that should be spent in each role category. (6 min.)
3. Ask participants to briefly share what they have written individually. Next, ask each small group to complete the portion of the Paraeducator Roles Activity sheet labeled "To be discussed in small groups." They should respond to the two listed questions and record their responses. (10 min.)
4. Facilitate a large group discussion about the participants' individual and small-group responses to the activity sheet prompts and questions. (12 min.)

Q&A Discussion Questions

1. Were there any discrepancies between the actual and the ideal amounts of time devoted to various roles?
2. Are paraeducators trained for their roles?
3. What issues or ideas did you identify about the initial and ongoing training needs of paraeducators?
4. What other thoughts or questions did your discussion prompt?

A3 ROLE CONTROVERSIES (35 min.)

Show Overhead (TL 2-3)



Objective 2

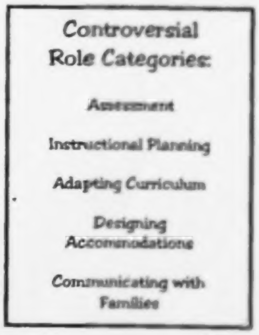
Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will know about areas of role controversy regarding paraeducators.

TL 2-3

Read Aloud

Objective 2: Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will know about areas of role controversy regarding paraeducators.

Show Overhead (TL 2-4)



Controversial
Role Categories:

Assessment

Instructional Planning

Adapting Curriculum

Designing
Accommodations

Communicating with
Families

Read Aloud

It seems as though paraeducators are being asked to do more and more all the time. The list on the overhead reflects some of the major areas where paraeducators are being asked to perform duties for which they may not be appropriately equipped. Some people believe that the listed areas should be the primary responsibility of the professional or certified staff, with the opportunity for input and support from paraeducators. There is concern that the least trained staff members are being asked to work with the most challenging students and engage in professional roles when they are not trained, certified, or paid as professional educators. You will have an opportunity to explore and discuss these issues in the following activity.

Refer to the Participant's Manual

Unit 2 Activity Sheet: Paraeducator Role Controversies

Paraeducator Role Controversies Activity (33 min.)

1. Ask participants to form groups of three or four members and assume group roles (e.g., facilitator, recorder, reporter).
2. Although the participants are arranged in groups, the first part of the activity is to be completed individually by each participant. Explain that participants will be given 5 minutes to complete the portion of the Paraeducator Role Controversies Activity sheet (2 pages) labeled "To be completed individually." Ask each person to

write the extent to which paraeducators in their classes engage in each controversial area listed, and whether he or she thinks they are appropriately trained and qualified for each of those roles. (5 min.)

3. Ask the participants to briefly share what they have written individually. Next, ask each small group to complete the portion of the Paraeducator Role Controversies Activity sheet labeled "To be discussed in small groups." They should respond to the two listed questions and record their responses. (14 min.)
4. Facilitate a large group discussion about the participants' individual and small-group responses to the activity sheet prompts and questions. (14 min.)

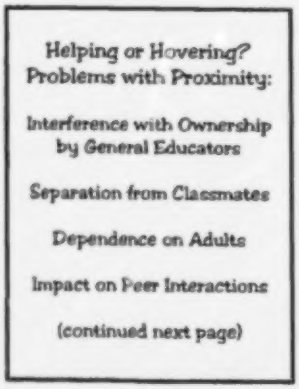
Discussion Questions

1. Which of these controversial roles should be engaged in by teachers, special educators, paraeducators, or others?
2. How do you decide if it is appropriate for a paraeducator to engage in any of the listed roles?
3. What makes sense to you in terms of carrying out the listed role categories (e.g., assessing, planning, adapting)?
4. What is the status quo (current practice in your classroom and school) regarding the controversial role categories, and how do you feel about it?
5. What supports would need to be in place for professional staff to retain more of these roles?

A4 BREAK (15 min.)

Role Controversies continued

Show Overhead (TL 2-5)



Helping or Hovering?
Problems with Proximity:

Interference with Ownership
by General Educators

Separation from Classmates

Dependence on Adults

Impact on Peer Interactions

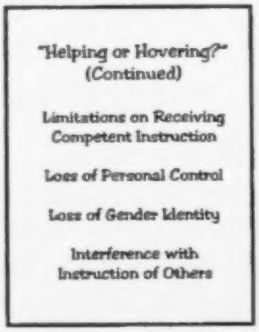
(continued next page)

TL 2-5

Read Aloud

When paraeducators work with individual students with disabilities their assignment is always intended to be beneficial. Yet as you learned from your reading for this class, sometimes excessive proximity by paraeducators can have unintended detrimental effects. These include: (1) interfering with ownership by the regular classroom teacher (known to be a key factor in successful inclusion of students with disabilities), (2) separation from classmates, (3) dependence on adults, and (4) impact on peer interactions. Additional unintended effects are shown on next overhead.

Show Overhead (OH TL 2-6)



"Helping or Hovering?"
(Continued)

Limitations on Receiving
Competent Instruction

Loss of Personal Control

Loss of Gender Identity

Interference with
Instruction of Others

TL 2-6

Read Aloud

These additional unintended effects include: (5) limitations on receiving competent instruction, (6) loss of personal control, (7) loss of gender identity, and (8) interference with instruction of others. Of course, sometimes close proximity is necessary and desirable.

Refer to the Participant's Manual

Unit 2 Readings: Page 11 of the "Helping or Hovering?..." article provides examples of each type of problem listed on the overheads.

Unit 2 Activity Sheet: Helping or Hovering: Classroom Assessment

Helping or Hovering Activity (28 min.)

1. Ask participants to form groups of three or four members and assume group roles (e.g., facilitator, recorder, reporter).

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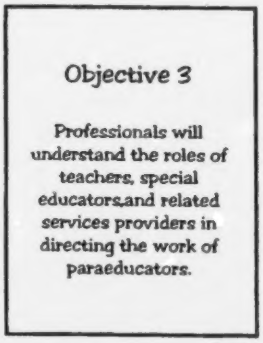
2. Using the Helping or Hovering Classroom Assessment (found in the Participant's Manual), ask each participant to answer the 22 yes or no questions listed on the activity sheet. (8 min.)
3. Next ask the participants to discuss their individual responses in their small groups, with an emphasis on the extent to which the listed items occur in their situations, what this means to them, and what, if anything, might be done differently in any problem areas. (10 min.)
4. Facilitate a large group discussion about the participants' individual and small group responses to the activity sheet questions. (10 min.)

Discussion Questions

1. Does hovering occur in your classroom or school?
2. Which of the listed items seem to pose the greatest concern in your classroom?
3. To what extent are various team members (e.g., teacher, special educator, students, parents) aware of this issue?
4. What can be done differently to avoid the problems related to excessive proximity?

A5 ROLES OF PROFESSIONALS DIRECTING THE WORK OF PARAEDUCATORS (30 min.)

Show Overhead (TL 2-7)



Objective 3

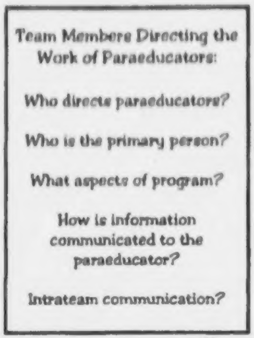
Professionals will understand the roles of teachers, special educators,and related services providers in directing the work of paraeducators.

TL 2-7

Read Aloud

Objective 3: Professionals will understand the roles of teachers, special educators, and related services providers in directing the work of paraeducators.

Show Overhead (TL 2-8)



Team Members Directing the Work of Paraeducators:

Who directs paraeducators?

Who is the primary person?

What aspects of program?

How is information communicated to the paraeducator?

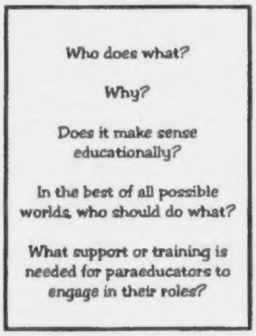
Intrateam communication?

TL 2-8

Read Aloud

Given the potentially large number of professional staff members who are directly involved with paraeducators, who is doing what to whom can become confusing. The next activity will address the issues shown on the overhead to assist you in planning.

Show Overhead (TL 2-9)



Who does what?

Why?

Does it make sense educationally?

In the best of all possible worlds, who should do what?

What support or training is needed for paraeducators to engage in their roles?

TL 2-9

Read Aloud

Consider the questions presented on this overhead as you participate in the following activity.

Refer to the Participant's Manual

Unit 2 Activity Sheet: Team Members Directing the Work of Paraeducators

Professional Roles Activity (28 min.)

1. Ask participants to form groups of three or four members and assume group roles (e.g., facilitator, recorder, reporter).
2. Ask the small groups to use the activity sheet labeled "Team Members Directing the Work of Paraeducators" (found in the Participant's Manual). The group will use the prompts and questions listed on the activity sheet to clarify the existing practices of the professional staff in directing the work of paraeducators and to identify potential plans for change. (18 min.)
3. Facilitate a large group discussion about the participants' small-group responses to the activity sheet questions. (10 min.)

Discussion Questions

1. How clear is it to all team members who directs the various work of the paraeducators?
2. Is there a primary person who directs the work of the paraeducators and does it make sense to you for that person to have that responsibility?
3. What might you do differently in directing the work of paraeducators?
4. What other questions or ideas does this discussion raise for you?

A6 REVIEW OF READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (20 min.)

Discussion Questions

Ask participants to refer to the questions they prepared for the class based on the readings for the unit. Ask participants to pose their questions, and then respond and/or invite participants to respond. (20 min.)

Note to the Instructor

If the participants are reluctant to ask questions, ask for the questions to be handed to you. Then select some of the questions to read aloud (without mentioning the name of the person asking) to facilitate the discussion.

Refer to the Participant's Manual

Unit 3 Readings

Remind participants that the Unit 3 readings should be read prior to the next class meeting and that at least two question should be written in preparation for class discussion.

A7 REVIEW OF PRACTICUM AND UNIT EVALUATION (10 min.)

Refer to the Participant's Manual

Practicum Requirements Section

1. Review the practicum requirements for Unit 2.
   Ask the participants to refer to their Participant's Manual and review the three practicum requirements:
   - Develop a plan for clarifying the roles of paraeducators in the classroom that includes both the overlaps and the distinctions between professional and paraprofessional roles.
   - Meet as a group with a paraeducator, teacher, and special educator to discuss the current status of "helping or hovering" in the classroom and identify, in writing, at least two things to do differently.
   - Clarify the roles of the various professionals who work with the paraeducator. Develop a one-page plan that specifies important information (e.g., Who directs what? Who is the primary contact for the paraeducator? If the paraeducator is being directed by more than one professional, how is that communicated within the team?).

   Remind participants that they must complete at least two of the list requirements. Tell them that they may also propose alternatives that are individually appropriate given their situation. Tell them that any alternative practicum activities must be approved by the instructor in advance of completion.
2. Distribute Unit 2 evaluation forms and ask participants to complete and turn in before leaving class.

Overhead Masters for Unit 2:

Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities of Paraeducators and Other Team Members

Objective 1

Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will understand the roles and responsibilities of paraeducators.

Paraeducator Roles:

Implementing Teacher-Planned Instruction

Supervision of Students

Clerical and General Duties

Behavioral/Social Support

Supporting Individual Students

Objective 2

Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will know about areas of role controversy regarding paraeducators.

Controversial Role Categories:

Assessment

Instructional Planning

Adapting Curriculum

Designing Accommodations

Communicating with Families

TL 2-4

Helping or Hovering? Problems with Proximity:

Interference with Ownership by General Educators

Separation from Classmates

Dependence on Adults

Impact on Peer Interactions

(continued next page)

"Helping or Hovering?" (Continued)

Limitations on Receiving Competent Instruction

Loss of Personal Control

Loss of Gender Identity

Interference with Instruction of Others

TL 2-6

Objective 3

Professionals will understand the roles of teachers, special educators, and related services providers in directing the work of paraeducators.

Team Members Directing the Work of Paraeducators:

Who directs paraeducators?

Who is the primary person?

What aspects of program?

How is information communicated to the paraeducator?

Intrateam communication?

TL 2-8

Role Clarification:

Who does what?

Why?

Does it make sense educationally?

In the best of all possible worlds, who should do what?

What support or training is needed for paraeducators to engage in their roles?

Unit 3

Planning for Paraeducators

Instructor's Overview

Unit 3: Planning for Paraeducators

Brief Description of Unit

The purpose of this unit is to provide information and strategies about planning the work of paraeducators who support the education of students with disabilities in general education. This includes scheduling for paraeducators, planning instructional activities for them to implement, and planning for non-instructional tasks (e.g., large-group supervision, clerical tasks).

Hours of Instruction (in class format)

3 hours

Unit Objectives

Key: K = Knowledge, S = Skill (Knowledge objectives are addressed through readings and class activities; skill objectives are addressed through practicum activities.)

1. Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will know strategies for scheduling and effectively using the time of paraeducators. (K)
2. Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will identify necessary components of instructional and non-instructional plans designed for implementation by a paraeducator. (K)
3. Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will know a variety of strategies for training paraeducators to implement instructional and non-instructional plans developed by educators and related services providers. (K)
4. Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will demonstrate skills in scheduling for paraeducators as well as developing instructional and non-instructional plans to be implemented by paraeducators and ways of training them in using those plans. (S)

Preparing for and Implementing the Unit

Required Readings (located only in the Participant's Manual)

Backus, L., & CichoskiKelly, E. (2000). *Paraeducators implementing teacher-planned instruction*. Unpublished manuscript, Burlington, VT: University of Vermont, Center on Disability and Community Inclusion.

Doyle, M.B. (1997). The paraprofessional in the inclusive classroom: Supporting individual students. In M.B. Doyle, *The paraprofessional's guide to the inclusive classroom: Working as a team* (pp. 27-37). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Instructor materials:

- overhead projector and screen
- overhead masters (must be copied onto transparencies)
- flip charts and markers
- masking tape
- nametags
- enough copies of the Unit 3 evaluation form (located in the *Forms* section of the Participant's Manual) to distribute to each member of the class

Instructor Preparation for Unit 3:

- Read the required readings (located only in the Participant's Manual) prior to the class.
- Gather all instructor materials.
- Consider the physical arrangement of the classroom to facilitate class activities.
- Review the practicum requirements for Unit 3.

Participant Preparation for Unit 3:

- Read the required readings **prior to class.**
- Based on the required readings, write two questions that are relevant to you or your situation for discussion in class.
- Bring writing materials for note-taking to class.
- Bring your Participant Manual to class.
- Review the practicum requirements for Unit 3.

Instructor Implementation of Unit 3:

The unit includes an agenda with timelines, lesson plan, required readings, and practicum requirements to be completed in the educational setting. The agenda is located at the beginning of the unit. The activities are interspersed within the lesson plan.

Practicum Requirements

Participants are encouraged to complete the unit's practicum activities each week, between class meetings if possible. Participants must complete at least two of the practicum requirements for Unit 3. Practicum activities must be completed in the time frame negotiated by the instructor and the class. An accompanying practicum checklist of the activities is found in the Participant's Manual. In the event that a practicum requirement is not appropriate for the professional's specific situation, alternate activities may be substituted based on negotiation with the instructor. The completed practicum checklist must be submitted to the instructor along with corresponding evidence of completed practicum activities.

Evaluation of Participant Learning

Participants are evaluated in three ways: (1) *Self-Assessment Review* (to be completed after the last class session), (2) attendance and participation in class activities, and (3) completion of practicum requirements.

Suggested Supplemental Resources

Books and Articles

Alberto, P.A., & Troutman, A.C. (1995). *Applied behavior analysis for teachers (4th ed.).* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Doyle, M.B. (1997). *The paraprofessional's guide to the inclusive classroom: Working as a team.* Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes. (2nd edition due out in 2002).

Pickett, A.L., & Gerlach, K.L. (1997). *Supervising paraeducators,in school settings: A team approach.* Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

Web Sites

National Clearinghouse for Paraeducator Resources
http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/CMMR/Clearinghouse.html

National Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services
http://web.gc.cuny.edu/dept/case/nrcp/

Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium
http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/para/

Agenda

Unit 3: Planning for Paraeducators (3 hours)

	Agenda Item	Time
A1.	Unfinished Business	10 min.
A2.	Scheduling and Effective Time Use Introduce Objective 1 (2 min.) Scheduling Activity (14 min.) Time-Use Strategies (14 min.)	30 min.
A3.	Developing Plans Introduce Objective 2 (2 min.) Instructional Planning Activity (33 min.)	35 min.
A4.	BREAK	15 min.
	Developing Plans (continued) Non-Instructional Planning Activity	20 min.
A5.	Training Paraeducators to Implement Plans Introduce Objective 3 (5 min.) Professional Roles Activity (35 min.)	40 min.
A6.	Review of Reading Discussion Questions	20 min.
A7.	Review of Practicum and Unit Evaluation	10 min.

Note to the Instructor

By this point in the class, the use of nametags may or may not be necessary. This will depend on the class size and the level of familiarity of participants with each other and you. Make a judgment regarding whether nametags should continue to be worn.

A1 UNFINISHED BUSINESS (10 min.)

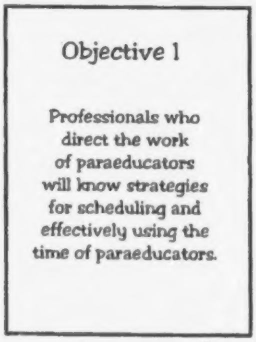
Note to the Instructor

Ask the participants if they have questions about the previous unit's content ("Clarifying roles...") before proceeding with the new unit material.

Encourage participants to respond to questions in addition to responding yourself.

A2 SCHEDULING AND EFFECTIVE TIME USE (30 min.)

Show Overhead (OH TL 3-1)



Objective 1

Professionals who
direct the work
of paraeducators
will know strategies
for scheduling and
effectively using the
time of paraeducators.

TL 3-1

Read Aloud

Objective 1: Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will know strategies for scheduling and effectively using the time of paraeducators.

Read Aloud

School personnel frequently identify not having enough time for collaborating with each other as a common challenge. Some of the activities we will be participating in this class session are meant to give you opportunities to share what you know works and maybe to identify some new possibilities. We will begin with some fact-finding.

Refer to the Participant's Manual

Unit 3 Activity Sheet: Schedule Fact-Finding

Schedule Fact-Finding Activity (14 min.)

1. Ask participants to form groups of three or four members.
2. Ask the participants to individually review the six options on the Schedule Fact-Finding Activity Sheet and select the one that most closely reflects their current situation.
3. Then ask the group to use the prompts on the activity sheet to guide their small-group discussion.
4. Encourage participants to record their feedback generated during the discussion to facilitate the scheduling activity to be completed in the practicum.

Refer to the Participant's Manual

Unit 3 Activity Sheet: Time-Use Strategies

Time Use Activity (14 min.)

1. Ask participants to form groups of three or four members.
2. Give the participants 7 minutes to generate a list of things they currently do to use time effectively in working with paraeducators, using the Time-Use Activity Sheet. This is an opportunity to get ideas from and share ideas with other teachers.

- Ask participants to defer their judgment and record as many ideas as possible using a round-robin method (each person should have an opportunity to respond once in a round before starting the next round).
- Encourage participants to provide a succinct example that lends itself to a list format rather than a detailed explanation or rationale. People may say "Pass" in any round if nothing is coming to mind.
- The suggestions may relate to any aspect of time use, such as planning, meeting times, communication systems, or anything that helps use time effectively.

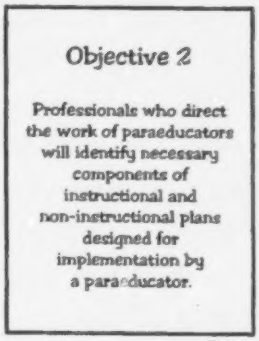
3. All ideas should be recorded so that the work of each small group can later be compiled and shared with everyone in the larger group.
4. Repeat step 2, except now ask participants to generate new ideas of things they could do to use their time with paraeducators more effectively.
    - The known ideas (previously listed) and the readings may serve to stimulate ideas. Especially encourage participants to use their creative abilities, defer their judgment, and record all ideas generated (again in a list format). Even if someone thinks a particular idea is not very good, just becoming aware of it may stimulate another idea by that person or someone else.
5. Again, all ideas should be recorded so that the work of each small group can later be compiled and shared with everyone in the larger group.
6. Ask for a complete list to be given to you for compilation and distribution at the next class session.

Read Aloud

I would like to collect your recorded ideas, one set for each group. I will compile the various groups' ideas and distribute them at the next class session.

A3 DEVELOPING PLANS (35 min.)

Show Overhead (OH TL 3-2)



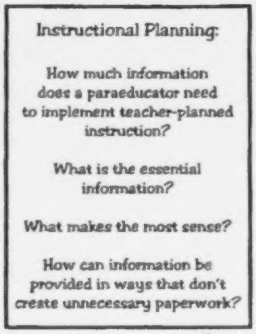
Objective 2

Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will identify necessary components of instructional and non-instructional plans designed for implementation by a paraeducator.

Read Aloud

Objective 2: Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will identify necessary components of instructional and non-instructional plans designed to be implemented by a paraeducator.

Show Overhead (OH TL 3-3)



Instructional Planning:

How much information does a paraeducator need to implement teacher-planned instruction?

What is the essential information?

What makes the most sense?

How can information be provided in ways that don't create unnecessary paperwork?

TL 3-3

Read Aloud

How much information does a paraeducator need to implement teacher-planned instruction? What is the essential information? What makes the most sense? How can information be provided in ways that don't create unnecessary paperwork? These are some of the key questions to be answered when planning for paraeducators.

Read Aloud

In the following activity you will have an opportunity to reflect on which aspects of instructional planning make sense in your situation. The information generated in your group will be helpful to you in some of your practicum activities.

Refer to the Participant's Manual

Unit 3 Activity Sheet: Instructional Planning

Instructional Planning Activity (33 min.)

1. Ask participants to form groups of three or four members.
2. Using the Activity Sheet Instructional Planning Components for Paraeducators, the group should make a list of possible plan components. They should fill the column labeled "Possible Plan Components" (deferring judgment). They should ask themselves, "What are the components (parts) of an instructional plan that paraeducators need to know?"

- Participants should rely on the readings and their own experience to identify possible components of an instructional plan (e.g., the lesson introduction, objectives, materials, setting, definitions of correct and incorrect responding, data collection method). (About 6 min.)

3. Once a list has been generated, participants should use the four remaining prompts on the Activity Sheet to consider whether each of the components needs to be addressed in new or ongoing plans and the level of detail required in any plan. Consensus need not be reached among group members since each person will decide on his or her own planning components and level of detail through the practicum activities. (About 15 min.)
4. Facilitates a large-group discussion in which participants are asked to share their points about instructional planning for paraeducators. (12 min.)

Q&A Discussion Questions

1. Is it reasonable to expect paraeducators to do their work without written plans?
2. What level of detail is needed in written plans for paraeducators?
3. How can you develop written plans in a way that is practical for you and the paraeducator?
4. What needs to happen to facilitate improved planning for paraeducators?
5. What planning for paraeducators does this activity prompt you to think about?

A4 BREAK (15 min.)

Developing Plans (continued, 20 min.)

Refer to the Participant's Manual

Unit 3 Activity Sheet: Non-instructional Planning

Non-Instructional Planning Activity (20 min.)

1. Ask participants to form groups of three or four members.
2. Using the Activity Sheet Non-instructional Planning Components for Paraeducators, each group should make a list of examples of non-instructional tasks implemented by paraeducators that require plans. Participants should fill the column labeled "Examples of Non-instructional Tasks That Require Plans." Participants should ask themselves, "What non-instructional tasks engaged in by paraeducators require plans?"
    - Participants should rely on the readings and their own experience to identify examples of non-instructional tasks (e.g., personal care supports, equipment management, playground supervision). (About 5 min.)

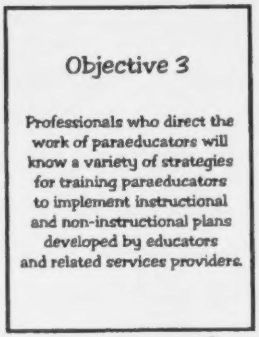
3. Once a list has been generated, participants should use the four remaining prompts on the Activity Sheet to consider whether plans for each of the examples are needed for existing paraeducators or substitute paraeducators and the level of detail required for any plan. Consensus need not be reached among group members since each person will select his or her own examples and level of detail through the practicum activities. (About 7 min.)
4. Facilitate a large-group discussion in which participants are asked to share their points about instructional planning for paraeducators. (8 min.)

Q&A Discussion Questions

1. Are non-instructional plans available to substitute paraeducators?
2. What needs to happen to facilitate improved planning for paraeducators?
3. What non-instructional planning for paraeducators does this activity prompt you to think about?

A5 TRAINING PARAEDUCATORS TO IMPLEMENT PLANS (40 min.)

Show Overhead (OH TL 3-4)



Objective 3

Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will know a variety of strategies for training paraeducators to implement instructional and non-instructional plans developed by educators and related services providers.

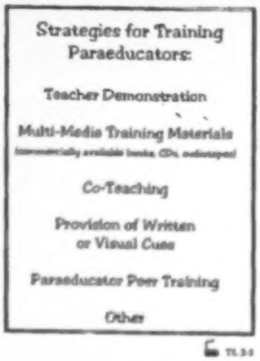
TL 3-4

Read Aloud

Objective 3: Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will know a variety of strategies for training paraeducators to implement instructional and non-instructional plans developed by educators and related services providers.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Show Overhead (OH TL 3-5)



Strategies for Training Paraeducators:

Teacher Demonstration

Multi-Media Training Materials
(commercially available books, CDs, audiotapes)

Co-Teaching

Provision of Written
or Visual Cues

Paraeducator Peer Training

Other

TL 3-5

Read Aloud

As we consider various ways to provide training for paraeducators, first it is important to distinguish between general training, such as having a paraeducator take some entry-level coursework on relevant topics, and training that is specific to the classroom where the paraeducator works. The next activity addresses training that is specific to the classroom where the paraeducator works and the individual requirements of the job because those are aspects of ongoing paraeducator training and support over which you have some control as an educator.

Read Aloud

As we review the training strategies listed on the overhead, it is important to think about what type of training approach matches the job task. For example, many clerical tasks might be appropriate opportunities to use Paraeducator Peer Training, in which one paraeducator experienced in a task trains another paraeducator. Such tasks may require brief or one-time training.

Other tasks, such as implementing a particular academic lesson or behavioral intervention, will require a qualified professional to be directly involved in training, and that training is likely to be more intensive and ongoing. Sometimes related services providers are the appropriate individuals to train a paraeducator. For example, if the paraeducator is working with a student who uses a wheelchair for mobility, a physical therapist may train the paraeducator in how to appropriately and safely position the student and provide assistance in and out of the wheelchair. It is likely that paraeducators will be trained using a variety of strategies.

Refer to the Participant's Manual

Unit 3 Activity Sheet: Strategies for Training Paraeducators

Strategies for Training Paraeducators Activity (35 min.)

1. Using a blank overhead or large chart paper to record response, ask the participants for other training strategies to add to the list from the overhead. Record all suggestions. (5 min.)
2. Ask participants to form groups of three or four members.
3. Have the group use the prompts and questions on the Strategies for Training Paraeducators Activity sheet (found in the Participant's Manual), to clarify the training strategies that should be used to support the work of paraeducators. (20 min.)
4. Facilitate a large group discussion about the participants' small-group responses to the activity sheet questions. (10 min.)

Q&A Discussion Questions

1. Did you identify training needs that can be addressed through existing training options, or does the training need to be developed?
2. Did you identify any ways to use technology in your training of paraeducators (e.g., the Internet, CD-ROM, distance learning, computer-assisted instruction)?
3. If certain training is to be provided by a related services provider, do team members other than the paraeducator need that training?
4. Did you find that most of the training needs required low, moderate, or high intensity training?
5. What did this exercise tell you about the current status of training paraeducators in your school?

A6 REVIEW OF READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (20 min.)

Q&A Discussion Questions

Ask participants to refer to the questions they prepared for the class based on the readings for the unit. Ask participants to pose their questions and then respond and/or invite participants to respond. (20 min.)

Note to the Instructor

If the participants are reluctant to ask questions, ask for the questions to be handed to you. Then select some of the questions to read aloud (without mentioning the name of the person asking) to facilitate the discussion.

Refer to the Participant's Manual

Unit 4 Readings

Remind the participants that the Unit 4 readings should be read prior to the next class meeting and that at least two questions should be written in preparation for class discussion.

A7 REVIEW OF PRACTICUM AND UNIT EVALUATION (10 min.)

Refer to the Participant's Manual

Practicum Requirements Section

1. Review the practicum requirements for Unit 3.
   Ask the participants to refer to their Participant's Manual and review the three practicum requirements:
   - Develop a written schedule for a paraeducator that includes an appropriate level of detail for the situation (e.g., enough to be useful, not so much as to be cumbersome or impractical).
   - Design an instructional planning form that you can use to develop written plans for paraeducators and substitute paraeducators. Design the form so that it has places to record all the information you think is vital in such a plan. Complete the form for at least one instructional lesson in which you would really use it — then use it with a paraprofessional and seek his or her input on how it worked and how it might be improved. Repeat the process by designing and using a non-instructional planning form.
   - Identify at least five tasks in which a paraeducator or substitute paraeducator needs training. These should include both instructional and non-instructional tasks. For each task identify the training strategy or combination of strategies to be used. Involve the paraeducator by seeking his or her input on how the task might best be learned. Also, identify the person who will provide the training and develop a schedule for when the training will occur. For example, if it is a short-term training need (e.g., clerical), when will it begin and end? If it is a more ongoing task (e.g., instructional), when will it be initiated and at what intervals will training occur? Implement the plan.

   Remind participants that they must complete at least two of the list requirements. Tell them that they may also propose alternatives that are individually appropriate given their situation. Tell them that any alternative practicum activities must be approved by the instructor in advance of completion.
2. Distribute Unit 3 evaluation forms and ask participants to complete and turn it in before leaving class.

Overhead Masters for Unit 3:

Planning for Paraeducators

Objective 1

Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will know strategies for scheduling and effectively using the time of paraeducators.

Objective 2

Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will identify necessary components of instructional and non-instructional plans designed for implementation by a paraeducator.

TL 3-2

Instructional Planning:

How much information does a paraeducator need to implement teacher-planned instruction?

What is the essential information?

What makes the most sense?

How can information be provided in ways that don't create unnecessary paperwork?

Objective 3

Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will know a variety of strategies for training paraeducators to implement instructional and non-instructional plans developed by educators and related services providers.

TL 3-4

Strategies for Training Paraeducators:

Teacher Demonstration

Multi-Media Training Materials
(commercially available books, CDs, audiotapes)

Co-Teaching

Provision of Written
or Visual Cues

Paraeducator Peer Training

Other

TL 3-5

Unit 4

Communicating with Paraeducators and Providing Feedback

Instructor's Overview

Unit 4: Communicating with Paraeducators and Providing Feedback

Brief Description of Unit

The purpose of this unit is to provide information about and strategies for communicating with and providing feedback to paraeducators who support the education of students with disabilities in general education.

Hours of Instruction (in class format)

3 hours

Unit Objectives

Key: K = Knowledge, S = Skill (Knowledge objectives are addressed through readings and class activities; skill objectives are addressed through practicum activities.)

1. Professionals will know information to share with paraeducators that establishes the importance of maintaining confidentiality in communications. (K)
2. Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will know a variety of skills for communicating effectively with paraeducators. (K)
3. Professionals will know a variety of ways to give feedback to paraeducators about their implementation of instructional and non-instructional plans developed by educators and related services providers. (K)
4. Professionals will demonstrate skills in communicating with paraeducators, providing them with feedback about their roles and about their implementation of instructional and non-instructional plans developed by educators and related services providers. (S)

Preparing for and Implementing the Unit

Required Readings (located only in the Participant's Manual):

Doyle, M.B. (1997). Maintaining confidentiality: Communicating with team members. In M.B. Doyle, *The paraprofessional's guide to the inclusive classroom: Working as a team* (pp. 61-71), Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

French, N. (1999). Supervising paraeducators—What every teacher should know. *CEC Today*, 6 (2), 12.

Lee, P.A. (1999). *Collaborative practices for educators: Strategies for effective communication*. Minnetonka, MN: Peytral Publications (pp. 10-12, 22-24, 34-36, 46-48, 56-58, 68-70, 82, 84, 87).

Schaffner, C.B., Buswell, B.E., Thousand, J., & Villa, R. (1999). Teams: Collaboration connects students. In B.E. Buswell, C.B. Schaffner, & A.B. Seyler (Eds.), *Opening doors: Connecting students to curriculum, classmates, and learning (2nd. ed.).* (pp. 9-12). Colorado Springs, CO: PEAK Parent Center.

Instructor materials:
- overhead projector and screen
- overhead masters (must be copied onto transparencies)
- flip charts and markers
- masking tape
- enough copies of the Self-Assessment Review and Unit 4 evaluation form (located in the *Forms* section of the Participant's Manual) to distribute to each member of the class.

Instructor Preparation for Unit 4:
- Read the required readings (located only in the Participant's Manual) prior to class.
- Gather all instructor materials.
- Consider the physical arrangement of the classroom to facilitate class activities.
- Review the practicum requirements for Unit 4.

Participant Preparation for Unit 4:
- Read the required readings **prior to class**.
- Based on required readings, write two questions that are relevant to you or your situation for discussion in class.
- Bring writing materials for note-taking and activities to class.
- Bring your Participant's Manual to class.
- Review the practicum requirements for Unit 4.

Instructor Implementation of Unit 4:
The unit includes an agenda with timelines, lesson plan, required readings, and practicum requirements to be completed in the educational setting. The agenda is located at the beginning of the unit. The activities are interspersed within the lesson plan.

Practicum Requirements

Participants are encouraged to complete the unit's practicum activities each week, between class meetings if possible. Participants must complete at least two of the practicum requirements for Unit 4. Practicum activities must be completed in the time frame negotiated by the instructor and the class. An accompanying practicum checklist of the activities is found in the Participant's Manual. In the event that a practicum requirement is not appropriate for the professional's specific situation, alternate activities may be substituted based on negotiation with the instructor. The completed practicum checklist must be submitted to the instructor along with corresponding evidence of completed practicum activities.

Evaluation of Participant Learning

Participants are evaluated in three ways: (1) *Self-Assessment Review* (to be completed after the last class session), (2) attendance and participation in class activities, and (3) completion of practicum requirements.

Suggested Supplemental Resources

Books and Articles

Idol, L., Nevin, A., & Paolucci-Whitcomb, P. (1999). *Collaborative consultation* (3rd ed.). Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

Lee, P.A. (1999). *Collaborative practices for educators: Strategies for effective communication.* Minnetonka, MN: Peytral Publications.

Pickett, A.L. (1999). *Strengthening and supporting teacher/provider-paraeducator teams: Guidelines for paraeducator roles, supervision, and preparation.* New York: National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services, Center for Advanced Study in Education, Graduate Center, City University of New York.

Pickett, A.L., & Gerlach, K. (1997). *Supervising paraeducators in school settings: A team approach.* Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

Villa, R.A., & Thousand, J. (2000), *Restructuring for caring and effective education: Piecing the puzzle together (2nd ed.).* Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Web Sites

National Clearinghouse for Paraeducator Resources
http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/CMMR/Clearinghouse.html

National Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services
http://web.gc.cuny.edu/dept/case/nrcp/

Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium
http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/para/

Agenda

Unit 4: Communicating with Paraeducators and Providing Feedback (3 hours)

	Agenda Item	Time
A1.	Unfinished Business	10 min.
A2.	Confidentiality in Communication Introduce Objective 1 (2 min.) Confidentiality Activity (23 min.)	25 min.
A3.	Communicating Effectively Introduce Objective 2 (4 min.) Developing Expectations, Preparing Ahead, and Understanding Perspectives Activity (36 min.)	40 min.
A4.	BREAK	15 min.
	Communicating Effectively (continued) Asking Questions, Listening, and Speaking Clearly Activity	30 min.
A5.	Providing Feedback to Paraeducators Introduce Objective 3 (5 min.) Professional Roles Activity (35 min.)	40 min.
A6.	Review of Reading Discussion Questions	10 min.
A7.	Review of Practicum, Unit Evaluation and Self-Assessment Review	10 min.

Note to the Instructor

By this point in the class, the use of nametags may or may not be necessary. This will depend on the class size and the level of familiarity of participants with each other and you. Make a judgment regarding whether nametags should continue to be worn.

A1 UNFINISHED BUSINESS (10 min.)

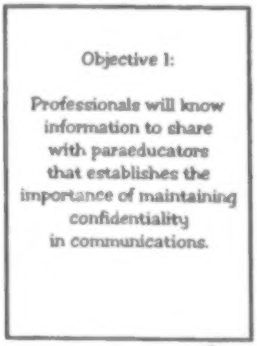
Note to the Instructor

Ask the participants if they have questions about the previous unit's content (Planning for Paraeducators) before proceeding with the new unit material.

Encourage participants to respond to questions in addition to responding yourself.

A2 CONFIDENTIALITY IN COMMUNICATION (25 min.)

Show Overhead (OH TL 4-1)



Objective 1:

Professionals will know information to share with paraeducators that establishes the importance of maintaining confidentiality in communications.

TL 4-1

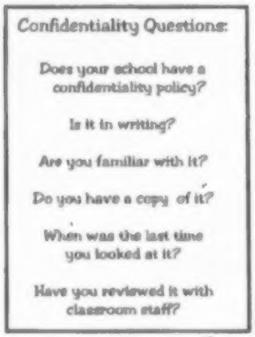
Read Aloud

Objective 1: Professionals will know information to share with paraeducators that establishes the importance of maintaining confidentiality in communications.

Read Aloud

The first activity today is based on your readings regarding confidentiality. As you participate in the activity, ask yourself some of the questions presented on the following overhead.

Show Overhead (OH TL 4-2)



Confidentiality Questions:

Does your school have a confidentiality policy?

Is it in writing?

Are you familiar with it?

Do you have a copy of it?

When was the last time you looked at it?

Have you reviewed it with classroom staff?

Read Aloud

If you answered no to any of these questions, or you have not looked at the policy recently, it is probably time to revisit your school's confidentiality policy.

Refer to the Participant's Manual

Unit 4 Activity Sheet: Confidentiality Scenarios (from Doyle, pp. 69-70)

Note to the Instructor

Point out to the participants that the Confidentiality Scenarios and questions they are about to consider have no definitive "correct answers." Rather, they present the uncertainties and gray areas of confidentiality. Such examples point out that while some actions are a clear breach of confidentiality, many are not so clear-cut.

Confidentiality Scenarios Activity (23 min.)

1. Ask participants to form groups of three or four members and assume appropriate roles (e.g., facilitator, recorder, reporter).

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

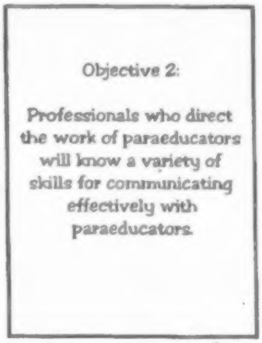
2. Ask participants to read the first scenario presented ("Student to Student") in the Confidentiality Scenario Activity Sheet and respond to the discussion questions. Then ask participants to record their insights and questions to share with the large group. (6 min.)
3. Next, ask the participants to read the second scenario ("Faculty Lounge Talk") and respond to the discussion questions. Then ask participants to record their insights and questions to share with the large group. (6 min.)
4. Next, ask the participants to read the third scenario ("Community Helpers") and respond to the discussion questions. Then ask participants to record their insights and questions to share with the large group. (6 min.)
5. Have the participants reconvene as a large group to share their insights and questions regarding confidentiality. (5 min.)

Discussion Questions

1. What insights or questions were raised by considering these three scenarios?
2. Based on this activity, how do feel about the status of confidentiality in your classroom and school for paraeducators and other staff?

A3 COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY (40 min.)

Show Overhead (OH TL 4-3)



Objective 2:

Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will know a variety of skills for communicating effectively with paraeducators.

TL 4-3

Read Aloud

Objective 2: Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will know a variety of skills for communicating effectively with paraeducators.

Read Aloud

Between now and our break time we will be reviewing three of the six categories of communication behavior from the Lee (1999) reading: (1) Developing Expectations, (2) Preparing Ahead, and (3) Understanding Perspectives. We will review the remaining three categories after the break.

Refer to the Participant's Manual

Unit 4 Readings: Collaborative Practices... (Lee, 1999)

Note to the Instructor

Provide time prompts so that small groups know when to switch from one topic to the next during the activity. Give them a one-minute warning and then ask them to switch to the next category.

Effective Communication Activity (36 min.)

1. Ask participants to form groups of three or four members and assume appropriate roles (e.g., facilitator, recorder, timekeeper).
2. Ask participants to refer tc page 11 in Lee (1999), "Developing Expectations..." and, as a group, to review each pair of items under "What We Often Do To Kids" and "What We Sometimes Do with Adults," deciding which communication skills are in the greatest need of attention. Participants can use whatever recording system works for them (e.g., +/-, circling, numeric rating). Encourage each member to share any specific strategies they have used that support "Developing Expectations" and discuss how those skills relate to the communication between group members. (12 min.)
3. Repeat Step 2 for "Preparing Ahead" on page 23 of Lee (1999). (12 min.)
4. Repeat Step 2 for "Understanding Perspectives" on page 35 of Lee (1999) (12 min.)

A4 BREAK (15 min.)

Developing Plans (continued, 20 Min.)

Note to the Instructor

Break up and reform the groups so that different people have a chance to work together. Remember to keep track of the time for switching topics during the activity.

Refer to the Participant's Manual

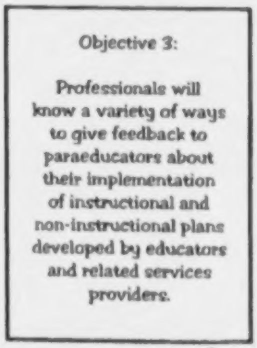
Unit 4 Readings: Collaborative Practices... (Lee, 1999)

Effective Communication Activity (continued –30 min.)

1. Ask participants to form new groups of three or four members and assume appropriate roles (e.g., facilitator, recorder, timekeeper).
2. Ask participants to refer to page 47 in Lee (1999), "Asking Questions" and, as a group, to review each pair of items under "What We Often Do To Kids" and "What We Sometimes Do with Adults," deciding which communication skills are in the greatest need of attention. Encourage group members to share any specific strategies they have used that support "Asking Questions" and discuss how those skills relate to the communication between group members. (10 min.)
3. Repeat Step 2 for "Listening" on page 57 of Lee (1999). (10 min.)
4. Repeat Step 2 for "Speaking Clearly" on page 69 of Lee (1999).(10 min.)

A5 PROVIDING FEEDBACK TO PARAEDUCATORS (40 min.)

Show Overhead (OH TL 4-4)



Objective 3:

Professionals will know a variety of ways to give feedback to paraeducators about their implementation of instructional and non-instructional plans developed by educators and related services providers.

TL 4-4

Read Aloud

Objective 3: Professionals will know a variety of ways to give feedback to paraeducators about their implementation of instructional and non-instructional plans developed by educators and related services providers.

Read Aloud

As we consider providing feedback to paraeducators in the following activity, you are encouraged to consider less formal, ongoing feedback as well as more formalized observation and feedback.

Refer to the Participant's Manual

Unit 4 Activity Sheet: Professional Roles in Providing Feedback...

Professional Roles Activity (35 min.)

1. Ask participants to form new groups of three or four members again and assume appropriate roles (e.g., facilitator, recorder, timekeeper).
2. Ask the groups to use the prompts and questions on the Professional Roles in Providing Feedback... Activity sheet (found in the Participant's Manual), to clarify what feedback currently is provided to support the work of paraeducators and what could be done to improve things. (25 min.)
3. Then facilitate a large group discussion about the participants' small-group responses to the activity sheet questions. (10 min.)

Discussion Questions

1. What is currently being done in terms of providing feedback to paraeducators?
2. What ideas were shared that improve the feedback being provided to paraeducators?
3. What aspects of your own experiences receiving feedback can you apply to your work with paraeducators?

A6 REVIEW OF READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (10min.)

Discussion Questions

Ask participants to refer to the questions they prepared for the class based on readings for the unit. Ask participants to pose their questions and then respond and/or invite participants to respond. (10 min.)

Note to the Instructor

If the participants are reluctant to ask questions, ask for the questions to be handed to you. Then select some of the questions to read aloud (without mentioning the name of the person asking) to facilitate the discussion.

A7 REVIEW OF PRACTICUM, UNIT EVALUATION AND SELF-ASSESSMENT REVIEW (10 min.)

Refer to the Participant's Manual

Practicum Requirements Section

1. Review the practicum requirements for Unit 4.
   Ask the participants to refer to their Participant's Manual and review the three practicum requirements:
   - Conduct a meeting with the paraeducator and other team members to clarify confidentiality policies and expectations. Refer to the Unit 4 reading by Doyle (1997, p. 71) for questions to guide your meeting.
   - Identify at least one communication skill from each of the six categories found in the Unit 4 reading by Lee (1999) that you will take actions to improve in your interactions with the paraeducator. You should tell the paraeducator which communication skills you are seeking to improve and then request feedback from the paraeducator twice weekly for two weeks.
   - Develop two practical forms for providing feedback to the paraeducators, one each for: (a) ongoing, informal feedback; and (b) more formal feedback based on direct observation of the paraeducator implementing teacher-planned instruction. Implement your plans.

   Remind participants that they must complete at least two of the list requirements. Tell them that they may also propose alternatives that are individually appropriate given their situation and that any alternative practicum activities must be approved by the instructor in advance of completion.
2. Ask participants to complete the Unit 4 Evaluation and turn it in before leaving class.
3. Have each participant complete the *Self-Assessment Review* and hand it in to the instructor before leaving class.

Overhead Masters for Unit 4:

Communicating with Paraeducators and Providing Feedback

Objective 1:

Professionals will know information to share with paraeducators that establishes the importance of maintaining confidentiality in communications.

TL 4-1

Confidentiality Questions:

Does your school have a confidentiality policy?

Is it in writing?

Are you familiar with it?

Do you have a copy of it?

When was the last time you looked at it?

Have you reviewed it with classroom staff?

TL 4-2

Objective 2:

Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will know a variety of skills for communicating effectively with paraeducators.

Objective 3:

Professionals will know a variety of ways to give feedback to paraeducators about their implementation of instructional and non-instructional plans developed by educators and related services providers.

TL 4-4

Forms

Course Announcement

Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators

Here's your opportunity to share with other teachers ideas about working effectively with paraeducators!

Instructor: ______________________________

Dates: ______________________________

Times: ______________________________

Location: ______________________________

The course includes four units (3 hours each):

Unit 1:	Welcoming, Acknowledging & Orienting Paraeducators
Unit 2:	Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities of Paraeducators and Other Team Members
Unit 3:	Planning for Paraeducators
Unit 4:	Communicating with Paraeducators and Providing Feedback

The course also includes a 10-hour practicum requirement.

For registration information contact: ______________________________

At: ______________________________

Participant Registration Form

Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators

Directions: Please complete the following identifying information. In addition to the 12 hours of classroom instruction and activities, participants in the mini-course titled, **Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators** also must currently work with, or plan to work with, at least one paraeducator to fulfill the practicum requirements. Additionally, participants must have signed an agreement from the principal of their school making him or her aware that the participants plan to complete practicum requirements with the paraeducator in their school. It is each participant's responsibility to identify a paraeducator with whom they will conduct practicum activities and obtain his or her signature on this registration form.

Participant Information:

Name: ______________________________

Mailing address: ______________________________

____

Phone: ______________ Fax: ______________

E-mail: ______________________________

Job title: ______________________________

School name and address: ______________________________

____

Number of years of experience as a teacher, special educator, or related services provider:

____

Do you have any special needs (e.g., large-print materials, Braille, special testing or seating accommodations) that must be addressed for you to participate in the mini-course?

____

____

____

(continued on next page)

Participant Registration Form (cont.)

Cooperating Paraeducator:

Name and signature of the paraeducator(s) for practicum involvement:

____

____

Principal sign-off:

I, ____________________ am aware that ____________________

(Principal's name) (Participant's name)

is participating in the mini-course titled "Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators." I am also aware that as part of this course the participant will be engaging in a variety of practicum activities with the above named paraeducator(s).

____

(Principal's signature) (Date)

Participant Confirmation Letter

Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators

Date: ____

Dear: ____

(Participant' name)

This letter confirms your registration in the mini-course Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators, being given by:

____

(Name of institution or school offering the mini-course)

In order to receive the **Participant's Manual**, which includes all unit overviews, readings, and other course materials, you will first need to complete the attached *Self-Assessment Preview* and mail it back to the instructor at the address provided.

The Self-Assessment Preview will be used to provide the instructor with information about how you perceive your current practices on working with paraeducators. It will also serve as a point of reference for you to determine any change in your work with paraeducators as a result of participating in this mini-course.

Once the instructor has received your *Self-Assessment Preview,* he or she will notify you of procedures for obtaining the Participant's Manual and will provide you with a schedule of class dates, times, and locations. Your Participant's Manual contains required readings, **some of which must be read prior to the first class,** therefor it is important that you allow sufficient time to obtain the manual and complete the readings.

If you have any questions prior to the first class you may contact:

____

(Name and phone number or e-mail of contact person)

Looking forward to seeing you at the first class!

Sincerely,

____

____

____

(Name, address, and phone number of instructor)

Self-Assessment Preview

Name:
Date:
Job Title:
Course Instructor:
Years of Experience:
Course Site:

PURPOSE: This Self-Assessment Preview is designed to assist course participants in considering their own work with paraeducators at the outset of the mini-course titled "Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators." The self-assessment helps identify areas of strength and need. It is related directly to course content and practicum activities. At the completion of the mini-course, participants will be asked to self-assess again to reflect on changes that may have occurred as a result of course participation.

DIRECTIONS: For each item circle the number that most closely reflects your status at this time. Respond based on what you do personally. If you work with more than one paraeducator, provide a response considering your overall situation.

#	Content	I don't do this, and I don't know enough about it.		I know it's important, but I just don't get to it.		I'm doing it, but not enough.		I'm doing it and feel it's going well.	
1	Paraeducators with whom I work are welcomed in class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2	Paraeducators with whom I work are well oriented to the school (e.g., places, people, policies, philosophy, practices, procedures).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3	Paraeducators with whom I work are well oriented to the classroom (e.g., routines, practices, instructional programs).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

#	Content	I don't do this, and I don't know enough about it.		I know it's important, but I just don't get to it.		I'm doing it but not enough.		I'm doing it and feel it's going well.	
4	Paraeducators with whom I work are well oriented to the students with whom they work (e.g., knowledgeable about: IEP goals, participation in general education curriculum, supports needed, aspects of disability that affect learning, motivations, interests).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
5	The roles of the paraeducators with whom I work are explicitly stated and match their knowledge and skills.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
6	My role and the roles of the other professional staff in relation to the paraeducators are clear and well understood by all team members.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
7	Paraeducators with whom I work have a daily written schedule of duties to follow.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

#	Content	I don't do this, and I don't know enough about it.		I know it's important, but I just don't get to it.		I'm doing it but not enough.		I'm doing it and feel it's going well.	
8	Paraeducators with whom I work have written plans to follow when implementing teacher-planned instruction and other duties.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	Paraeducators with whom I work receive initial and ongoing training to carry out their assigned duties.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
10	Paraeducators with whom I work have mechanisms to communicate with me on an ongoing basis.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
11	Paraeducators with whom I work receive ongoing feedback on their job performance, both formally and informally.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
12	Paraeducators with whom I work have a thorough understanding of appropriate confidentiality practices and school policies on the topic.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Participant Course Information

Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators

Dear Course Participant,
The course you have registered for, Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators, will meet on the following schedule:

Dates: ____________________________________

Times: ____________________________________

Location: ____________________________________

The course instructor is: __________________________

The instructor can be contacted at: ____________________

Phone: ______________ Fax: __________ E-mail: ______________

Address: ____________________________________

____

You must obtain a Participant's Manual so you can complete Unit 1 readings prior to the first class. You can obtain your Participant's Manual by one of these two options.

1. Instructor's Plan: ______________________________

____

OR

2. By contacting:

National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials (NCRTM)
Oklahoma State University
5202 Richmond Hill Drive
Stillwater, OK 74078-4080
800-223-5219 (toll free)
405-624-7650 (phone)
405-624-3156 (TDD)
405-624-0695 (fax)
www.nchrtm.okstate.edu

REQUEST: PARTICIPANT MANUAL 650.049B
Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators
This manual is available on a cost-recovery basis.

Unit 1: Instructor Evaluation

Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators

Unit 1: Welcoming, Acknowledging & Orienting Paraeducators
Instructor name: ______________________ Date: ____________________

Directions: Please check the box next to the statement that most closely reflects your opinion regarding the following questions.

1. How **important** were the objectives for Unit 1?
   - ☐ very important
   - ☐ important
   - ☐ somewhat important
   - ☐ not important

2. How **relevant** were the required readings for Unit 1?
   - ☐ very relevant
   - ☐ relevant
   - ☐ somewhat relevant
   - ☐ not relevant

3. How **useful** were the activities for Unit 1?
   - ☐ very useful
   - ☐ useful
   - ☐ somewhat useful
   - ☐ not useful

4. How **relevant** were the practicum requirements for Unit 1?
   - ☐ very relevant
   - ☐ relevant
   - ☐ somewhat relevant
   - ☐ not relevant

5. Please use the rest of this page to make suggestions for improving the objectives, required readings, activities, and practicum requirements for Unit 1.

Unit 2: Instructor Evaluation

Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators

Unit 2: Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities of Paraeducators and Other Team Members
Instructor name: ____________________________ Date: ________________________

Directions: Please check the box next to the statement that most closely reflects your opinion regarding the following questions.

1. How **important** were the objectives for Unit 2?
   - ☐ very important
   - ☐ important
   - ☐ somewhat important
   - ☐ not important

2. How **relevant** were the required readings for Unit 2?
   - ☐ very relevant
   - ☐ relevant
   - ☐ somewhat relevant
   - ☐ not relevant

3. How **useful** were the activities for Unit 2?
   - ☐ very useful
   - ☐ useful
   - ☐ somewhat useful
   - ☐ not useful

4. How **relevant** were the practicum requirements for Unit 2?
   - ☐ very relevant
   - ☐ relevant
   - ☐ somewhat relevant
   - ☐ not relevant

5. Please use the rest of this page to make suggestions for improving the objectives, required readings, activities, and practicum requirements for Unit 2.

Unit 3: Instructor Evaluation

Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators

Unit 3: Planning for Paraeducators

Instructor name: ____________________ Date: ________________

Directions: Please check the box next to the statement that most closely reflects your opinion regarding the following questions.

1. How **important** were the objectives for Unit 3?
   - ☐ very important
   - ☐ important
   - ☐ somewhat important
   - ☐ not important

2. How **relevant** were the required readings for Unit 3?
   - ☐ very relevant
   - ☐ relevant
   - ☐ somewhat relevant
   - ☐ not relevant

3. How **useful** were the activities for Unit 3?
   - ☐ very useful
   - ☐ useful
   - ☐ somewhat useful
   - ☐ not useful

4. How **relevant** were the practicum requirements for Unit 3?
   - ☐ very relevant
   - ☐ relevant
   - ☐ somewhat relevant
   - ☐ not relevant

5. Please use the rest of this page to make suggestions for improving the objectives, required readings, activities, and practicum requirements for Unit 3.

Unit 4: Instructor Evaluation

Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators

Unit 4: Communicating with Paraeducators and Providing Feedback

Instructor name: ______________________ Date: ______________________

Directions: Please check the box next to the statement that most closely reflects your opinion regarding the following questions.

1. How **important** were the objectives for Unit 4?
   ☐ very important
   ☐ important
   ☐ somewhat important
   ☐ not important

2. How **relevant** were the required readings for Unit 4?
   ☐ very relevant
   ☐ relevant
   ☐ somewhat relevant
   ☐ not relevant

3. How **useful** were the activities for Unit 4?
   ☐ very useful
   ☐ useful
   ☐ somewhat useful
   ☐ not useful

4. How **relevant** were the practicum requirements for Unit 4?
   ☐ very relevant
   ☐ relevant
   ☐ somewhat relevant
   ☐ not relevant

5. Please use the rest of this page to make suggestions for improving the objectives, required readings, activities, and practicum requirements for Unit 4.

Certificate of Completion

Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators

This certifies that ________________________________ has completed

12 hours of classroom instruction and 10 hours of practicum requirements for

____

(school/institution providing training)

____

(dates)

____

(Instructor's signature)

650.049B

Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators

Participant's Manual

Michael F. Giangreco, Ph.D.

Field Test Version 2.0 September 2001 Feedback is requested

EC 309354

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IDEAs that Work

U.S. Office of Special
Education Programs

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Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators

Participant's Manual

Michael F. Giangreco, Ph.D.

University of Vermont
Center on Disability and Community Inclusion
The University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service

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Introduction

Overall Purpose of the Teacher Leadership Training Curriculum

More than anything else, this course is designed to provide a mechanism to bring together teachers and special educators to share ideas, experiences, and strategies and to problem-solve together about how to effectively work with paraprofessionals. Most teachers and special educators who direct the work of paraprofessionals are extremely busy and are thankful to have an extra pair of helping hands to assist with the work that needs to be done for students with and without disabilities. Yet many professionals acknowledge that not enough is done to orient, train, provide feedback to, and support the important work being offered by paraprofessionals. It is not that teachers are unaware of the needs related to paraprofessionals —typically they are keenly aware. Rather, it is more a matter of finding the time to work on this aspect of the classroom program when there are so many other pressing needs. This mini-course provides an opportunity for teachers and special educators to come together to work on paraprofessional issues in practical and supportive ways.

> More than anything else, this course is designed to provide a mechanism to bring together teachers and special educators to share ideas, experiences, and strategies and to problem-solve together about how to effectively work with paraprofessionals.

We struggled to give this mini-course a title because so often the word used to summarize the content of this sort of curriculum is "supervision." Although there is nothing inherently wrong with calling this collection of content "supervision," the term has varying contractual meanings across the country and from school to school. In many places the term "supervision" refers to formal observation and evaluation. In preparing these materials, we were reminded by several school administrators that such "supervisory" duties are technically the role of principals or other school administrators. At the same time, everyone we spoke with acknowledged that teachers and special educators really do the day-to-day work with paraprofessionals. So call it what you will, "supervision," "teacher leadership," or "directing the work of paraprofessionals," our main goal is to facilitate more constructive working relationships between paraprofessionals and the certified educational personnel with whom they work most directly.

Although we have long known the importance of addressing paraprofessional issues, this aspect of education for students with disabilities has received additional attention in the field with the reauthorization of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997* [(IDEA), 20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.] and subsequent regulations in 1999. The IDEA requires that state education agencies "establish and maintain standards" to ensure that paraprofessionals "used to assist in the provision of special education and related services to children with disabilities" are "appropriately and adequately prepared," "trained," and "supervised" "in accordance with State law, regulations, or written policy" [20 U.S.C. 1412 § 612(15)]. In other words, the IDEA requires states to ensure that "qualified personnel" will be available to assist in educating students who have disabilities; this includes paraprofessional staff. The IDEA also requires the local educational agency (LEA) to ensure that all personnel working with students with disabilities are "appropriately and adequately prepared" [20 U.S.C. 1412 § 613 (a) (3)].

In an effort to address certain aspects of that requirement, this mini-course is designed to facilitate collaborative and constructive relationships among teachers and special educators who direct the work of paraprofessionals, hereafter referred to as *paraeducators*. Although IDEA uses the term "paraprofessionals," individuals serving in these roles are known by a wide variety of titles such as "instructional assistant," "teacher assistant," "classroom assistant," and others. Our project staff have decided to use the term "paraeducator" because these are individuals who work with, and along side of educators. In this context, the paraeducator is a team member who functions under the direction of qualified teachers or special educators.

This mini-course, *Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators*, is one part of a broader effort to advance the work of paraeducators by providing learning opportunities for both paraeducators and those who direct their work. While this mini-course addresses the roles and activities of teachers and special educators who work with paraeducators in general education settings, there are companion courses specifically designed for paraeducators who work with students with disabilities in general education settings.

The primary focus of these courses for paraeducators is to impart the *initial*, and *most essential*, knowledge and skills necessary for paraeducators to begin their work. These courses do not attempt to include everything a paraeducator might need to know in order to be effective. That is why any such training program should be considered as one part of a more comprehensive plan to recruit, hire, orient, train, and supervise paraeducators on an ongoing basis. For more information on the courses for paraeducators, check our web site at:
http://www.uvm.edu/~uapvt/paraprep/

Philosophical Foundation

The philosophical foundation for this mini-course is based on the recognition that creating inclusive classrooms for students with disabilities requires that personnel, including paraeducators, need to have attitudes, values, knowledge, and skills that explicitly pertain to the context of general education. Inclusive settings require a variety of roles as well as collaboration and communication among various professionals, including general educators. Paraeducators in general education settings need to know how to promote peer interaction and positive interdependence between students with and without disabilities. They need to develop competence in working with diverse groups of students who exhibit varied learning styles within general education settings and who are pursuing differing, individually appropriate, learning outcomes within the same classroom activities. Many paraeducators feel ill-prepared to handle the academic content, social dynamics, and behavioral challenges that need to be addressed within general education classrooms. Similarly, many classroom teachers have received minimal, if any, training in how to work with paraeducators.

The entry-level paraeducator curriculum and this mini-course on teacher leadership emphasize the unique nature of the paraeducator "assisting" in implementing instruction designed by teachers, special educators, and related services providers. Our project staff believes that assessment, curricular design and adaptation, and primary instruction are roles of the educators, special educators, and related services personnel. Therefore, a second philosophical tenet is that we do not expect a paraeducator to be "the exclusive or primary teacher" for students with or without a disability label. Students with disabilities deserve to be educated by certified, qualified teachers in their neighborhood schools, just like students without disabilities. At the same time, we recognize that paraeducators play a vital support role in many classrooms—their work should be recognized and appreciated. It is important for roles to be clarified and for paraeducators to learn the skills most necessary to contribute to a positive, supportive, inclusive educational experience for children without usurping the role of or substituting for the classroom teacher or special educator.

In addition, we have come to recognize the wide array of roles and responsibilities that paraeducators are being asked to fulfill and question whether they can be expected to meet this ever expanding set of increasingly complex demands without adequate training, support, or compensation. At times the paraeducator is unfairly expected to do the work of a teacher—in such cases we wonder whether training is really the answer or whether other models of service delivery (e.g., hiring more qualified teachers, differentiating teacher roles) may be more appropriate. Third, we have been guided by the principles presented in the article *Developing a Shared Understanding: Paraeducator Supports for Students with Disabilities in General Education*

(Giangreco et al., 1999). This document lists a set of statements that reflect the shared understanding of the authors regarding paraeducator supports for students with disabilities in general education classes.

Intended Audience

This mini-course is intended for certified educators or teachers in training who do or will direct the work of paraeducators who support students with disabilities in general education settings. These educators include: (a) classroom teachers across all grade levels and subject areas, (b) special educators who support students with disabilities in general education classes, and (c) student teachers. The designations of "teacher" and "special educator" are meant to be used broadly. They can be interpreted to include a variety of individuals such as speech-language pathologists, librarians, preschool teachers, service learning coordinators, vocational teachers, or any other certified educational or related services professionals who are working with paraeducators to support students with disabilities.

The curriculum is meant to address the initial training needs of teachers and special educators working with students across the age-span and is generically applicable for those working with students who have various types of disabilities. It is primarily geared toward use in general education schools and classrooms, although the content is applicable to community or employment settings where students with disabilities are included with people who do not have disabilities. The nature of the course contents accounts for its use in urban, suburban, rural, and remote areas. But, like any training program, it should be tailored to meet local conditions.

Course Content and Organization

The mini-course *Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators* consists of four units of study, each designed to be completed in a 3-hour class for a total of 12 classroom hours. The units are:

Unit 1: Welcoming, Acknowledging and Orienting Paraeducators
Unit 2: Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities of Paraeducators and Other Team Members
Unit 3: Planning for Paraeducators
Unit 4: Communicating with Paraeducators and Providing Feedback

Ten hours of practicum activities are included in the mini-course that provide participants with some initial opportunities to apply what they have learned and begin practicing their skills. Each teacher or special educator is required to make arrangements to complete the 10 hours of the practicum with the support of the school principal. The principal's role is to be aware of the course activities and provide appropriate support to the teacher as needed.

The mini-course includes an Instructor's Manual and a Participant's Manual.

Basis for the Course

A number of foundational sources of information informed the development of this curriculum. They include:

- a review of published paraeducator literature (both data based and non-data based) from 1990-2001;
- a review of paraeducator/paraprofessional Dissertation Abstracts from 1992-1999;
- a national survey completed by a variety of stakeholder groups (e.g., parents, paraeducators, special educators, classroom teachers, related services providers, state education staff, and school administrators) about the perceived training needs and priorities for paraeducators and the educators who direct their work;
- input from a national advisory council made up of paraeducators, principals, students, parents, and state education personnel;
- input from teachers and special educators about the proposed curriculum;
- in-depth data (e.g., questionnaires, interviews, document reviews, and observations) generated from a model demonstration project that examined paraeducator issues in general education classrooms in Vermont; and
- initial field-testing of the course with public school teachers, special educators, and college students (at the student teaching level).

Formats of Training

The needs and circumstances of educators vary. Training formats must be flexible to meet those needs and circumstances, and therefore, the content included in this curriculum is designed to be offered in different formats. This course includes a Self-Assessment Preview and Review, unit overviews, readings, lesson plans that include class activities, a mechanism for evaluation, and practicum requirements. The course can be offered as inservice training with or without continuing education or university credit (1 credit).

Course Format

The traditional course format is based on face-to-face interactions between an instructor and course participants through traditional methods such as large and small group activities. This format can be provided in various ways. It can be delivered regionally or within a single district or school. It can be delivered in an intensive format (e.g., 2 or 3 day) or spread over 4 weeks (e.g., 3 hours per week). The course is not dependent on outside trainers and can be appropriately facilitated by a variety of qualified school personnel who have experience with paraeducators (e.g., principal, classroom teacher, special educator, or staff development specialist). Although different formats for learning the course content are available (e.g., self-study, distance learning), certain aspects of the traditional course format (e.g., meeting face to face with other teachers) can be difficult to replicate. We think that the traditional course format option generally is preferable. It can be offered to groups ranging from 5 to 20 participants. Depending on the delivery format selected, local trainers may be asked to do this training within the context of their existing job responsibilities or compensated for additional time spent beyond their contracted duties.

Formats Relying on Technology

Project staff are exploring the use of technology (e.g., interactive video, internet courses, and CD-ROM) as an option for offering this course to teachers and special educators who lack access to traditional courses because of issues such as scheduling conflicts or transportation barriers. As information becomes available about these options it will be posted on our web site, http://www.uvm.edu/~uapvt/paraprep/

Limitations of the Training Series

While this, and other training programs, can certainly assist schools in developing a more qualified workforce, it is not a magic wand, but merely one piece of the puzzle. No training program will solve all the problems related to service delivery, instruction, classroom management, and other important issues affecting student learning. This training program, like many programs, is brief and therefore focuses on a set of essential outcomes needed by teachers and special educators who work with paraeducators to support students with disabilities in general education settings. It does not replace the need for ongoing staff development, nor does it substitute for the daily and ongoing on-the-job support.

Other training resources are listed at this project's Web site at http://www.uvm.edu/~uapvt/paraprep/ and at a companion Web site at http://www.uvm.edu/~uapvt/parasupport/

References

Giangreco, M.F., CichoskiKelly, E., Backus, L., Edelman, S., Broer, S., Tucker, P., CichoskiKelly, C., & Spinney, P. (March 1999). Developing a shared understanding: Paraeducator supports for students with disabilities in general education. *TASH Newsletter*, 25 (3), 21-23.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997. Pub. L. No. 105-17, Section 20, 111 Stat. 37 (1997).

How to Use this Participant's Manual

This manual includes all of the information that the participant needs for the mini-course *Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators*. The first step recommended to the participant is to review the manual in order to become familiar with it. This section is designed to facilitate that process.

The course is divided into four units, and within each unit are:
- an overview
- required readings
- activity sheets

Practicum requirements and Participant unit evaluations for each unit of the course are located in the last section of the manual along with the Self-Assessment Review.

How to use the overviews

Use the overviews to prepare for the class of a specific unit. They contain:
- a brief description of the unit
- the hours of instruction
- the unit objectives
- student preparation (e.g., read required readings)
- a practicum requirement overview
- information about evaluation of student learning
- suggested supplemental resources
- The suggested supplemental resources extend beyond the scope of the unit. They are provided for students who wish to have more information than what is provided in the required readings.

How to use the required readings

- Each unit of the curriculum contains required readings that pertain to the unit topic.
- Certain class activities will require you to refer to the readings in this manual, so always bring it to class.
- You must be complete the required readings for a unit **prior to** the class for that unit. Class activities are based on information in the readings.
- Prepare at least two questions based on the required readings for each unit and bring those questions to class.

How to use the activity sheets

- This manual contains activity sheets for each unit that correspond to the lesson plan activities in the Instructor's Manual.
- You **do not** need to review the activity sheets prior to the class since the activities will be completed in class.
- Bring this manual to class in order to complete the activity sheets during class.

Information about the Self-Assessment Review

- The Self-Assessment Review is identical to the Self-Assessment Preview (that you completed prior to the start of the course). The Review is designed to assist you in reflecting on changes you have made based on your participation in this course. Additionally, it is meant to encourage you act on areas you have identified as needing improvement.
- The Self-Assessment Review will be completed at the end of the course and is required for successful course completion.

How to use the practicum requirement checklists

- Review the practicum requirements for each unit before the class for that unit.
- There are three practicum activity options listed for each unit. *You must select at least two activities to complete for each unit. Therefore, you must complete a total of at least 8 practicum activities selected from the list of 12 that offered to you.*
- Ask questions about the practicum requirements during the practicum review time at the end of each class.
- Try to complete the practicum requirements in a time frame that fits your work schedule; however, all practicum requirements must be completed no longer than three months after the end of the mini-course. These timelines may be changed by the instructor.
- Because some participants may not begin the practicum requirements until the completion of the entire course (e.g., if the course is offered in an intensive summer institute format over 2 or 3 days), it is important to understand the requirements and have a plan for implementation.
- If you feel that certain practicum requirements are not appropriate for your school site, you may suggest to the instructor alternative practicum activities that pertain to the unit. Alternate practicum activities should be suitable to your individual needs and must be approved by the instructor in advance.
- You are responsible for turning in the completed practicum checklists to the instructor at the end of the course on a date determined by the instructor,
- The instructor will keep the practicum checklists for each participant.
- The instructor will issue a Certificate of Completion to all participants who complete all of the course requirements.

Unit 1

Welcoming, Acknowledging and Orienting Paraeducators

Participant's Overview

Unit 1: Welcoming, Acknowledging & Orienting Paraeducators

Brief Description of Unit

The purpose of this unit is to provide information about and strategies for welcoming, acknowledging, and orienting paraeducators who support the education of students with disabilities in general education settings. This unit is based on the assumption that teachers and special educators already know how important it is to welcome, acknowledge, and orient paraeducators who work in their classrooms. Therefore, this unit will focus on readings and activities designed to assist teachers and special educators in assessing what they already do related to these areas so that they can address self-identified needs and share currently used approaches with other teachers in the class.

Hours of Instruction (In class format)

3 hours

Unit Objectives

Key: K = Knowledge, S = Skill (Knowledge objectives are addressed through readings and class activities; skill objectives are addressed through practicum activities.)

1. Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will be able to articulate the importance of welcoming, acknowledging, and orienting paraeducators. (K)
2. Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will develop a variety of strategies for welcoming and acknowledging paraeducators. (K)
3. Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will identify specific information that should be part of orienting paraeducators to the school, classroom, and students with whom they will be working. (K)
4. Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will demonstrate skills welcoming, acknowledging, and orienting paraeducators to the school, classroom, and students. (S)

Preparing for the Unit

Required Readings:

Doyle, M.B., & Lee, P.A. (1997). Creating partnerships with paraprofessionals. In M.F. Giangreco (Ed.). *Quick-guides to inclusion: Ideas for educating students with disabilities* (excerpts from pp. 57-83). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Giangreco, M.F. (April 2000). Supporting paraprofessionals in general education classrooms: What teachers can do. *I-Team News*. Center on Disability and Community Inclusion, University of Vermont, pp. 10-11.

Giangreco, M.F., CichoskiKelly, E., Backus, L., Edelman, S.W., Tucker, P., Broer, S., CichoskiKelly, C., & Spinney, P. (1999, March). Developing a shared understanding: Paraeducator supports for students with disabilities in general education. *TASH Newsletter, 25* (3), 21-23.

Giangreco, M.F., Edelman, S.W., & Broer, S.M. (2001). Respect, appreciation, and acknowledgment of paraprofessionals who support students with disabilities. *Exceptional Children, 67*, 485-495.

Participant Preparation for Unit 1:

- Read the required readings **prior to class**.
- Based on required readings, write two questions that are relevant to you or your situation for discussion in class.
- Bring writing materials for note-taking to class.
- Bring your Participant's Manual to class.
- Review the practicum requirements for Unit 1.

Practicum Requirements

You are encouraged to complete the unit's practicum activities each week, between class meetings if possible. Participants must complete at least two of the practicum requirements for Unit 1. An accompanying practicum checklist of the activities can found in the *Forms* section of this manual. In the event that a practicum requirement is not appropriate for your specific professional situation, alternate activities may be substituted based on negotiation with the instructor. The completed practicum checklist must be submitted to the instructor along with corresponding evidence of completed practicum activities.

Evaluation of Participant Learning

Participants are evaluated in three ways: (1) the *Self-Assessment Review* (to be completed after the last class session), (2) attendance and participation in class activities, and (3) completion of practicum requirements.

Suggested Supplemental Resources

Books and Articles

Doyle, M.B. (1997). *The paraprofessional's guide to the inclusive classroom: Working as a team*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

Friend, M., & Cook, L. (1996). *Interaction: Collaborative skills for school professionals (2nd ed.)*, New York: Longman.

Giangreco, M.F., Broer, S.M., & Edelman, S.W. (1999). The tip of the iceberg: Determining whether paraprofessional support is needed for students with disabilities in general education settings. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 24* (4), 281-291.

Pickett, A.L., & Gerlach, K. (1997). *Supervising paraeducators in school settings: A team approach.* Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

Pugach, M., & Johnson, L.J. (1995). *Collaborative practitioners: Collaborative schools.* Denver: Love.

Rainforth, B., & York-Barr, J. (1997). *Collaborative teams for students with severe disabilities: Integrated therapy and educational services (2nd ed.),* Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Web Sites

Paraeducator Support: www.uvm.edu/~uapvt/parasupport/
(see link: Paraeducator Web sites)

Unit 1 Required Readings

Welcoming, Acknowledging and Orienting Paraeducators

Unit 1 includes four readings to be read in preparation for the first class session. All four of the readings include information that is foundational to the entire mini-course (all four units). The Doyle & Lee (1997) chapter offers a general context, makes several important points and provides numerous practical examples designed to help teachers create constructive partnerships with paraprofessionals. The Giangreco (2000) article offers a dozen recommendations for how teachers can support the work of paraeducators. The third reading for this unit (Giangreco et al., 1999) provides an example of a "shared framework" for providing paraeducator supports. This shared framework includes a listing of 28 indicators presented in six categories (e.g., orienting and training, hiring and assigning, roles and responsibilities). The final reading (Giangreco, Edelman, & Broer, 2001) offers a qualitative research study addressing issues of respect, appreciation, and acknowledgment of the work of paraeducators. The combination of these four readings sets a context for the remainder of the mini-course.

Source: Doyle, M. B., and Lee, P. A. in
M. F. Giangreco (1997). *Quick-Guides to Inclusion: Ideas for Educating Students With Disabilities.* Reprinted with permission

Quick-Guide #3

Creating Partnerships with Paraprofessionals

Mary Beth Doyle and Patricia A. Lee

Quick-Guides to Inclusion: Ideas for Educating Students with Disabilities

Michael F. Giangreco, Ph.D.
Series Editor

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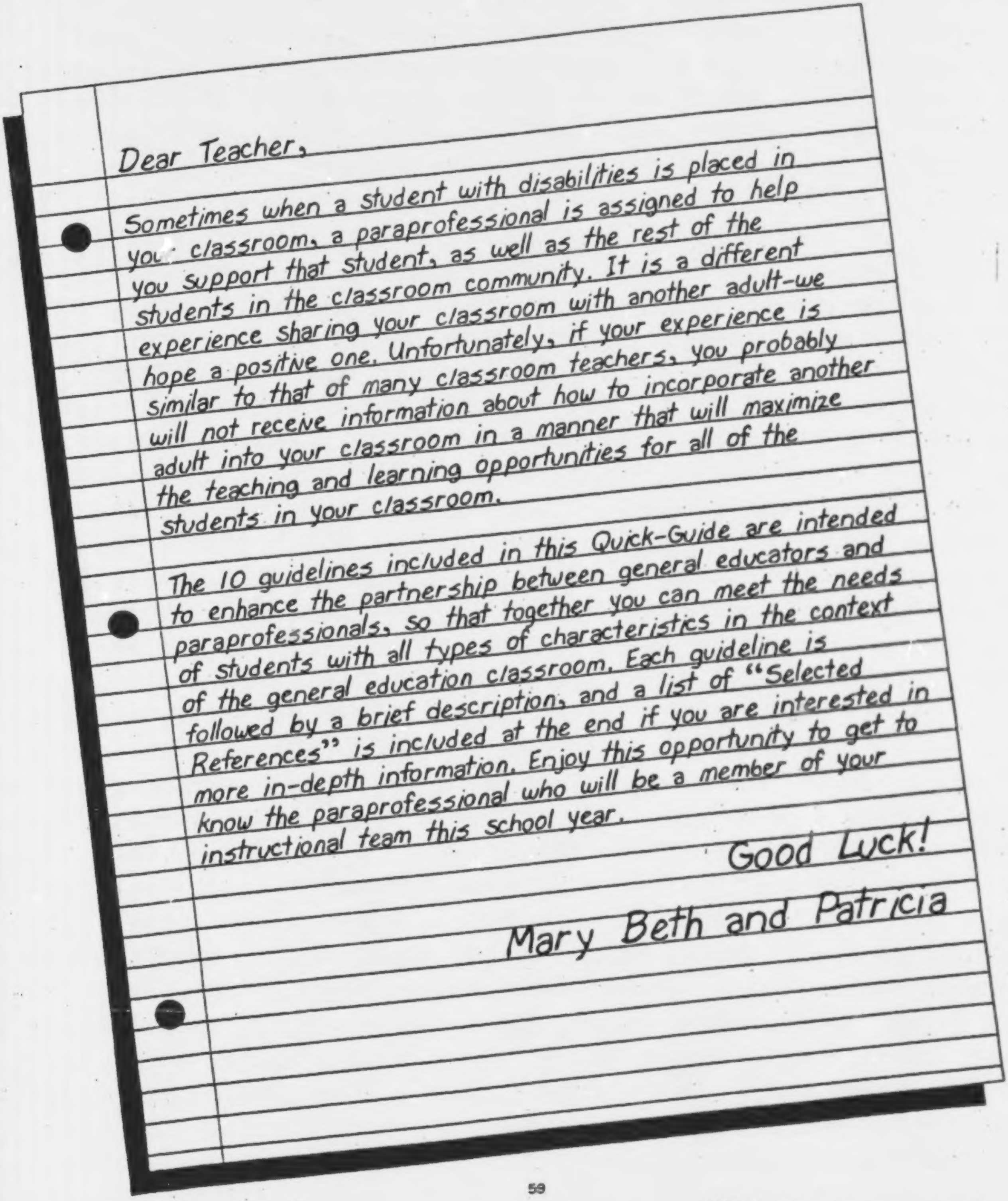

Dear Teacher,

Sometimes when a student with disabilities is placed in your classroom, a paraprofessional is assigned to help you support that student, as well as the rest of the students in the classroom community. It is a different experience sharing your classroom with another adult-we hope a positive one. Unfortunately, if your experience is similar to that of many classroom teachers, you probably will not receive information about how to incorporate another adult into your classroom in a manner that will maximize the teaching and learning opportunities for all of the students in your classroom.

The 10 guidelines included in this Quick-Guide are intended to enhance the partnership between general educators and paraprofessionals, so that together you can meet the needs of students with all types of characteristics in the context of the general education classroom. Each guideline is followed by a brief description, and a list of "Selected References" is included at the end if you are interested in more in-depth information. Enjoy this opportunity to get to know the paraprofessional who will be a member of your instructional team this school year.

Good Luck!

Mary Beth and Patricia

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GUIDELINES-AT-A-GLANCE

1. Welcome the Paraprofessional to Your Classroom
2. Establish the Importance of the Paraprofessional as a Team Member
3. Clarify the Paraprofessional's Roles and Responsibilities
4. Establish Shared Expectations for Student Learning and Classroom Management
5. Ensure that the Paraprofessional Is Guided by Certified Staff
6. Review Paraprofessional Activities Regularly
7. Establish Procedures for Unexpected Situations
8. Ensure that Paraprofessionals Promote Student Responsibility
9. Establish Times and Ways to Communicate
10. Evaluate the Effectiveness of the Paraprofessional

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Welcome the Paraprofessional to Your Classroom

Think about how you would like to be welcomed to a new setting and do those simple, yet important, things for the paraprofessional. Prepare a place for her (e.g., desk, table, mailbox, materials, coffee cup). Introduce her to others on the faculty and staff. Give her a tour around the school, highlighting those places you and your students frequent (e.g., faculty room, library, art room). Model for the students that the two of you are a team. Demonstrate respect by asking the paraprofessional's opinion on classroom decisions (e.g., student arrangement, learning centers, student work displays).

Perhaps the most important thing you can do every day is to thank the paraprofessional for her effort and contributions. Tell her that you appreciate her ideas and support. Remember her on special occasions (e.g., birthday, holidays); these gestures of appreciation do make a difference.

Through our experiences, we have learned that, if these things do not occur, paraprofessionals may end up working in isolation within the classroom. In such situations, paraprofessionals tend to work exclusively with the student with disabilities, rather than with all of the students in the class. As a result, both the student and the paraprofessional can become separated from the rest of the class even though they may share the same physical space of the general education classroom.

When paraprofessionals are welcomed, feel like they are an important part of the classroom, and have a place in the classroom, the foundation is laid for a productive partnership. Together, you and the paraprofessional can create a caring classroom community where all children are welcomed and supported in making progress toward their individualized learning goals.

Establish the Importance of the Paraprofessional as a Team Member

In most schools there are several types of "teams" (e.g., grade-level teams, content area teams, student support teams). Each team consists of a variety of people (e.g., students, parents, paraprofessionals, teachers, related services personnel) and has different, though interrelated purposes. Start by identifying the teams on which the paraprofessional needs to be an active member. Invite the paraprofessional accordingly and establish the reasons for his involvement.

Once the paraprofessional is involved with the team, there are several things that you can do to maximize the probability that his involvement will be substantive. Prior to team meetings, make sure the paraprofessional knows the purpose of the meeting, has an agenda, and knows how to get items added to the agenda. Suggest ways that he can prepare for meetings in advance. As the meeting starts, introduce him to other team members. Explain that you and the paraprofessional work together to meet the needs of all of the students in the classroom. Ask for his opinions, observations, questions, and comments. Like other team members, the paraprofessional may have tasks to complete as a result of the meeting. Check to see that the tasks are in alignment with his role as a paraprofessional.

In situations where the importance of the paraprofessional is not established, there is a diminished motivation for the paraprofessional to contribute and his work may become isolated and routinized. As a result, the paraprofessional can become less apt to offer creative ideas, suggestions, and important feedback. The whole team suffers if they neglect this significant resource. As the teacher, demonstrate that the paraprofessional is a valued and respected team member; we hope others will follow suit.

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Clarify the Paraprofessional's Roles and Responsibilities

It is not uncommon for classroom teachers and paraprofessionals to experience some initial confusion about roles and responsibilities; there are many ways to avoid this problem. Think about your own role as the classroom teacher and make a list of your responsibilities. Ask the paraprofessional to do the same. Discuss these lists with each other with the intent of clarifying both of your roles and associated responsibilities. Make this conversation an ongoing, dynamic one as your roles and responsibilities grow and change throughout the year. The cumulative effects of such conversations can lead to increased clarity about the roles and responsibilities of the paraprofessional in relation to yours as the classroom teacher.

It has been our experience that, when there is a lack of clarity about the paraprofessional's roles and subsequent responsibilities, there can be a tendency to think of her as being exclusively responsible for the student with disabilities, or as being the "teacher" for the student with disabilities. This practice is not appropriate. Paraprofessionals are not certified teachers and should not be expected to function as teachers. Rather, paraprofessionals are employed to assist certified staff in the delivery of educational services to students with and without disabilities. So be certain that you or the special educator take the responsibility to plan instructions for all of the students. Plan carefully how the paraprofessional can assist with the implementation of the instruction.

When there is clarity regarding paraprofessional roles and responsibilities, the classroom teacher maintains primary responsibility for all of the students in the classroom and the paraprofessional assists with this important work. This clarity contributes to a positive working environment.

Establish Shared Expectations for Student Learning and Classroom Management

As you work with the paraprofessional, keep in mind that the overall goal is student learning. As the classroom teacher, you have an idea of the "big picture" for student learning; it is important that the paraprofessional shares the same expectations. Discuss with him what you hope students will accomplish in the various subjects. Invite him to contribute his thoughts and ideas. Together, develop a set of shared expectations for student learning and classroom management.

Think about the way you manage your classroom. What level of activity are you comfortable with? How do you establish your classroom rules and expectations? What is your typical response to classroom conflicts? Share these thoughts and practices with the paraprofessional. Let him know in which situations he is free to intervene with students, and when he should check with you.

If the paraprofessional has been employed to assist primarily with one student, review the Individualized Education Program (IEP) that has been developed for that student. Explain how the student's IEP goals will be addressed within typical class activities with peers. Show him how he can assist.

When paraprofessionals are left on their own to "figure out" what students are learning and the preferred classroom management system, time may be wasted and misinterpretations made. In addition, students may be given mixed messages regarding the multiple sets of classroom routines that may evolve. When expectations for student learning and classroom management are shared, there is a sense of common purpose for adults and students, as well as clarity regarding what all of the students are learning and how the paraprofessional is expected to support that learning.

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Ensure that the Paraprofessional Is Guided by Certified Staff

Always remember that, as the classroom teacher, you are the instructional leader. Even when a paraprofessional has been employed to assist with one or more students, it is your responsibility to oversee the learning environment, including the activities of the paraprofessional. Show the paraprofessional how she can assist in instruction. Remember, typically paraprofessionals are not certified teachers; that is why it can be problematic for paraprofessionals to be given the responsibilities of designing and implementing instruction for students. Often these responsibilities fall to the paraprofessional by default rather than by design. Help the paraprofessional clarify which decisions to make on her own and provide reassurance that she can ask you or the appropriate staff person (e.g., nurse for health-related issues) for assistance.

Consult the team to clarify how the paraprofessional can best support student learning. Make sure the paraprofessional is part of these team discussions. Tell her you are seeking input from the team so that her contributions can be as meaningful as possible.

Too often paraprofessionals are left alone to decide what it is they are supposed to do. When activities are not designed and guided by certified staff, the paraprofessional's efforts can become fragmented and separate from the total learning environment. Classroom practice may be compromised and school policies may be violated unintentionally because the paraprofessional is not part of the formal communication loops.

When certified staff design and guide the activities of paraprofessionals, all students receive a more coordinated and integrated education. Remember, you are the classroom teacher for all of your students, and the paraprofessional is there to assist you.

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Review Paraprofessional Activities Regularly

Paraprofessional activities need to be reviewed regularly for appropriateness and effectiveness. When paraprofessionals are providing direct instructional support to students with and without disabilities, they need specific feedback about how well they are doing. Are they providing enough assistance without providing too much? Are they giving students opportunities to learn from mistakes as well as successes? Are their activities and interactions enhancing the total classroom environment?

As the teacher, you can develop a variety of ways to conduct such reviews that become integrated into your daily routine. Ask the paraprofessional to keep a log of how he is using his time, the type of input and training he receives from certified staff, and the like. Review the log with him to see if his daily activities are varied in ways that ensure that he is not supporting the student with disabilities exclusively. If this is happening, develop alternative ways in which the student can be supported (e.g., use of peers, shifting student groupings).

Like anyone else, the paraprofessional's activities should be varied enough that they do not become overly repetitive or mundane. Without some variety, the paraprofessional can lose sight of the overall goal and may devalue his own contributions. With regular reviews, you both will be informed about changes that need to be made before a situation becomes problematic. Such an approach will allow you to put your energies into proactive, rather than reactive, efforts.

Establish Procedures for Unexpected Situations

Schools are places of continual change. Schedules, absences, field trips, special events, visitors, assemblies, testing days, and myriad other irregularities make absolute consistency impossible. As a classroom teacher, you know the importance of flexibility and probably have strategies to deal with unexpected changes in daily routines. This may not be true for the paraprofessional. As you begin the school year, share with her a copy of the typical daily and weekly schedules. Be certain to provide her with the necessary training and support that she will need in order to facilitate many of the typical daily routines.

Discuss with the paraprofessional how you would like to handle unexpected changes in daily routines. Be as specific as possible. For example, what happens when the teacher, the paraprofessional, or other classroom personnel is absent? Or, how do you proceed when visitors come to the room? How can the paraprofessional be helpful during these times? What are the paraprofessional's responsibilities when students are engaging in testing or field trips? Does the paraprofessional have responsibilities related to the implementation of teacher-developed instruction, and, if so, what does she do when instruction is not planned in advance? Develop a strategy (e.g., notes in your plan book, on her desk) where you can communicate changes as you become aware of them. Agree on ways (e.g., time and places) for her to consult with you if she is uncertain about how to proceed.

When paraprofessionals are unaware of what to do in unanticipated situations, they are left in the position of having to guess. Though you cannot predict all of the situations that may occur, you can give guidance to the paraprofessional as to what things cause changes in the typical schedule and preferred ways of responding. This planning will give the paraprofessional a proactive way to contribute to the classroom.

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Ensure that Paraprofessionals Promote Student Responsibility

Students learn from taking risks; with that risk taking, there are bound to be both successes and failures. It is crucial that students be allowed to experience both. You and the paraprofessional can create a learning place that is safe enough for those risks and supportive enough for real student growth to occur. Talk with the paraprofessional about your own experiences. Tell him about some students you have assisted in becoming more independent and responsible for their own learning. Share examples of students who have learned from their mistakes. Invite the paraprofessional to do the same.

Convey that you are there to make the classroom a place where the students gain more independence and responsibility throughout the year. Stress the importance of monitoring how much assistance he is giving to students. Teach him to ask questions of himself like, "What am I doing for the student that she can do for herself?" "What does the student need to learn to do next to become more independent?" "When was the last time that the student was able to make a mistake?"

When student responsibility is not emphasized or clarified, it is very easy for the paraprofessional to believe that he is there to ensure that the students are experiencing success 100% of the time. He may rush to keep a student from making an error that actually would have resulted in new learning for the student. Be certain to tell the paraprofessional how he is doing related to this guideline.

Emphasizing student responsibility and talking about your roles in relationship to assisting students without "hovering" will create a common vision for all students in your classroom.

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Establish Times and Ways to Communicate

In order to work effectively with the paraprofessional, it is important to communicate on an ongoing basis using both formal and informal strategies. Develop a system of communication that takes into account **what** you need to communicate about, as well as **how** and **when** that will be done.

Generate a list of topics that you frequently need to communicate about (e.g., upcoming activities, daily lesson plans, development of student adaptations, preparation of instructional materials, contacts with parents). How do you currently communicate about these issues (e.g., verbal, written, not at all)? Is the strategy effective and efficient, or does it need modification? As the classroom teacher, you should develop a simple strategy to ensure that communication takes place. Be certain that you maintain communication with the family of the student with disabilities. For example, develop a classroom calendar that highlights upcoming events, provide the paraprofessional with a daily schedule, give her access to your plan book, and write notes about student adaptations and place the notes in your plan book. Commit to using the strategy for several weeks and then reevaluate the effectiveness. Modify it if necessary.

Identify a time during the day or week when you can meet with the paraprofessional to touch base, plan, and discuss classroom and student-specific issues. It has been our experience that 10 minutes a day can do wonders!

When the communication between the classroom teacher and the paraprofessional is poor, the paraprofessional is unclear about both what she is supposed to do and how it is to be done. As a result, she faces a guessing game that puts her at risk of overlooking potentially important instruction. As the classroom teacher, you have a powerful impact on the discussions that occur in your classroom.

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Evaluate the Effectiveness of the Paraprofessional

Evaluating one's effectiveness in supporting the learning and growth of children and youth is very important. The paraprofessional's roles and responsibilities are related to yours as the classroom teacher; therefore, as you provide feedback to the paraprofessional, you will undoubtedly be evaluating yourself in relationship to him. By the very nature of his job, the paraprofessional must rely on you and other team members for direction, training, and feedback. Refer back to the list of responsibilities that were generated by responding to the suggestions in Guideline #3. Use this list as the framework for providing the paraprofessional with specific feedback on his work. For each item, have him indicate how he is doing and what needs improvement. Do the same related to your own roles and responsibilities. Compare your responses and discuss whether he would benefit from additional modeling or training in a particular area. Use this as an opportunity to gather and document information about the paraprofessional's strengths, as well as areas in which he continues to grow.

Through our experiences, we have learned that when paraprofessionals do not receive feedback, they may draw false conclusions about how they are doing. Without direct and substantive training and feedback, they do not receive the benefit of professional assistance in learning how to be effective assistants in the classroom. When paraprofessionals receive ongoing training and assistance and participate in their own evaluation process, it can promote a sense of well-being and effectiveness.

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Supporting Paraprofessionals in General Education Classrooms: What Teachers Can Do

by Michael F. Giangreco

Given the proliferation of paraprofessional supports provided in schools for students with and without disabilities, many teachers encounter paraprofessionals on a regular basis (or will at some time) (French, 1999). Reauthorization of the Amendments to IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) in 1997 and subsequent regulations in 1999 also put renewed emphasis on issues pertaining to paraprofessionals who work with students who have disabilities. Of course, paraprofessionals do not work in a vacuum. Under IDEA they are required to work under the supervision of a "qualified professional." Typically, that means a certified teacher, special educator, or related services provider (e.g., a speech-language pathologist).

How Teachers Can Support the Work of Paraprofessionals?

If you have ever had the pleasure of working with an outstanding paraprofessional, you know how great it can be. Not only can paraprofessionals help make your work as a teacher more enjoyable and effective, they can provide critical supports that really make important contributions for the students in your room. It is in the best interest of teachers, on behalf of their students, to do whatever they can to create a working environment that is supportive of paraprofessionals. Worker satisfaction has long been positively linked with job performance. Paraprofessionals who experience higher levels of job satisfaction tend to be more successful in their work (Prest, 1993). While compensation is a key factor in whether paraprofessionals feel respected and satisfied with their jobs, that aspect of employment is beyond the control of individual teachers. What follows are some ideas from the literature that can assist teachers and principals in creating supportive work environments for paraprofessionals (Blalock, 1991; Doyle, 1997; French & Pickett, 1997; Giangreco et al., 1999; Jones & Bender, 1993; Prest, 1993; Prigge, 1996):

- ☐ Develop a shared philosophy and values that will guide your work as a team.
- ☐ Provide clear job descriptions that accurately reflect the work paraprofessionals do.
- ☐ Provide initial and ongoing training for paraprofessionals that is generically and specifically relevant to the role of the paraprofessional.
- ☐ Orient paraprofessionals to the school and classroom (e.g., to people, places, policies, philosophy), as well as to the students with whom they will work (e.g., their goals, accommodations, communication characteristics, motivations, behaviors, learning styles).
- ☐ Clarify the roles of paraprofessionals and the roles of other team members. Paraprofessionals' roles should reflect tasks appropriately carried out by them (e.g., implementing teacher-planned instruction given appropriate training and ongoing support; clerical tasks; group supervision of students; provision of personal care).
- ☐ Establish the "chain of command." Clarify who paraprofessionals should go to with various types of questions, problems, or concerns.
- ☐ Demonstrate respect and consideration for paraprofessionals. Acknowledge their contributions to the classroom and to the school.
- ☐ Establish the leadership role of the teacher or special educator with the paraprofessional. Paraeducators appreciate knowing that the teacher is accountable in the classroom.
- ☐ Establish mechanisms for frequent and ongoing communication and interaction among paraprofessionals, teachers, special educators, and related service providers who work with the same students.
- ☐ Initiate and maintain structures for the paraprofessional that are clear and predictable (e.g., classroom routines, schedule of duties, scheduled breaks, lesson plans).
- ☐ Demonstrate tolerance for doubt, uncertainty, variability, and postponement. Even though the teacher is in a superordinate role, such tolerance shows flexibility and recognition of the ever changing, and sometimes unpredictable, aspects of schooling.
- ☐ Develop opportunities for paraprofessionals to provide input into the operation of the classroom and to demonstrate initiative, independence, and creativity within agreed upon boundaries.
- ☐ Provide ongoing positive feedback and constructive direction to the paraprofessional about her or his work performance. This should be balanced so that the paraprofessional is not over- or undersupervised.

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Developing a Shared Understanding: Paraeducator Supports for Students with Disabilities in General Education

BY MICHAEL F. GIANGRECO, EILEEN OCHOSKIKELLY, LINDA BACKUS, SUSAN W. EDELMAN, PRISCILLA TUCKER, STEVE BROER, AND CHRISTOPHER OCHOSKIKELLY; CENTER ON DISABILITY & COMMUNITY INCLUSION-UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT; AND PAM SPINNEY, FAMILY & EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT TEAM, VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Introduction

In order for groups of people to become effective teams it is vital that they develop a shared understanding of the underlying beliefs, values, and principles that will guide their work together. This shared understanding evolves over time as members learn about each other, spend time together, and engage in the work of their group.

Having a shared understanding provides a basic structure within which teams:

- develop common goals;
- determine actions that will lead toward the attainment of their goals;
- ensure that their actions are consistent with their beliefs; and
- judge whether their efforts have been successful.

In essence, having a shared understanding helps team members develop their collective vision of the direction in which they would like to head. Therefore, a shared understanding is a statement of what is aspired to, rather than necessarily what currently is. In seeking to establish the what, prior to the how, developing a shared understanding is an initial step that must be followed by effective planning, implementation, and evaluation if the aspirations of the team are to be realized.

What constitutes an appropriate level of training to be an effective paraeducator[1] is currently a topic of national debate. However, there does seem to be widespread consensus that some level of orientation and training is required for individuals to be effective paraeducators. While some states have developed standards for paraeducators or enacted certification requirements, many have not. Under the provisions of IDEA, it is the responsibility of each state and local education agency to ensure that "qualified personnel" are working with students in their schools.

This article lists a set of statements that reflect the shared understanding of the authors regarding paraeducator supports for students with disabilities in general education classes. This shared understanding is based on our collective personal and professional experiences as parents, community members, advocates, paraeducators, teachers, special educators, related services providers, and administrators. We have combined those experiences with what we have learned from educational literature and research.

In presenting the following set of statements it is not our intention to suggest that these are the only, best, or correct components to be included. Rather we present them as our thoughts at this point in time, with the knowledge that they have changed since we first drafted them and we expect that they will continue to evolve. We hope that they will be helpful to other groups who are interested in paraeducator issues and foremost are interested in quality education for all students. In this context they can be used as a starting point in developing a shared understanding among the people in your own setting.

Ask yourself what you think about the items we have listed. How might you reword them to reflect your own collective thoughts and match your own situation? Are there any you would delete or add to those listed here? The set of statements included in one's shared understanding can also be used as a practical tool. It can help teams identify and prioritize their needs by collecting facts about the status of each component of the shared understanding using a self-assessment format. An action-planning

Continued on page 22

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[1] Throughout the remainder of this article you will notice that we have used the generic term "paraeducator" to refer to individuals who are trained to work with, and alongside, educators in classrooms and other educational settings to support the education of students with and without disabilities in a variety of capacities (e.g., physically, socially, instructionally). Paraeducators are school employees who, while not hired to work in the capacity of a professional position (e.g., teacher, special educator, related services provider), do provide important supportive services in schools under the direction and supervision of qualified school personnel.

We recognize that the terms used to refer to these school personnel vary widely and often are used interchangeably (e.g., teacher assistant, teacher aide, instructional assistant, program assistant, educational technician, job coach). Individuals with these various job titles are referred to in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as "paraprofessionals." We support the use of locally adopted job titles that are descriptive of the work done by these school personnel and which are designed to establish or increase respect for individuals who are providing these vital educational supports to students.

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Developing a Shared Understanding

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process that includes this application of a shared understanding is currently being developed and field-tested by staff at the Center on Disability and Community Inclusion in conjunction with the Vermont Department of Education and local schools.

Acknowledging Paraeducators

1. Paraeducators should be considered members of the educational teams for the students with whom they work. These teams typically consist of the student (when appropriate), the student's parents, teachers, special educators, and others as needed on an ongoing or situational basis (e.g., related services providers, school nurse, bus driver, mentors with similar disabilities as the student).
2. Paraeducators provide important services that influence student learning, social/emotional development, and inclusion.
3. Paraeducators should be valued, appreciated, and recognized for their unique competencies, hard work, and contributions to the classroom, school, and community.

Orienting & Training Paraeducators

4. Paraeducators should receive orientation (e.g., information about the student, classroom, and school) and entry-level training prior to working directly with students (e.g., family-centered principles; multicultural and other diversity issues; teamwork; inclusive education; roles and responsibilities of team members; principles of learning, to name a few).
5. Paraeducators should receive ongoing, on-the-job, training to match their specific job responsibilities and assignments.
6. Paraeducators should have access to ongoing learning opportunities, in addition to their on-the-job experiences (e.g., workshops, courses, internet study), that promote their skill development in relevant areas (e.g., supporting students with challenging behaviors; approaches to literacy; use of technology; needs of students with low incidence disabilities) and have input into what training they need.
7. Paraeducator training experiences should be designed to allow individuals to gain continuing education or college/university credit.

Hiring & Assigning Paraeducators

8. Practices should be established to recruit, hire, and retain paraeducators.
9. Substitute paraeducators should be recruited and trained to ensure that a student's access to education and participation in his/her educational program is not unduly disrupted when the regular paraeducator is unavailable due to occurrences such as illness, injury, personal leave, or professional development.
10. Each school should have an agreed upon team process and criteria for determining whether paraeducator support is needed for students with disabilities to receive an appropriate education.
11. When paraeducator support is determined to be necessary for a student, a written plan should explicitly clarify the nature and extent of the support and explain how it is referenced to the student's educational program (e.g., IEP goals, general education curriculum).
12. In most circumstances it is advisable to assign paraeducators to classrooms or instructional programs rather than to an individual student. In the rare cases when a paraeducator is needed for an individual student, efforts should be made to ensure that paraeducators provide supportive, rather than primary or exclusive, services.
13. When administrators make work assignments and re-assignments to meet students' educational needs, it is advisable to gain input directly from paraeducators and other team members (e.g., parents, teachers, special educators, related services providers) to understand factors that may influence job performance, job satisfaction, and reduce burn-out (e.g., variety of duties; interpersonal dynamics; individual skills and interests; longevity with a particular student).
14. Paraeducators should have an accurate job description that outlines their roles and responsibilities. This job description should be commensurate with the paraeducator's skill level as it pertains to students both with and without disabilities.
15. Paraeducators should be compensated in accordance with their level of education, training, experience, and skills.

Paraeducator Interactions with Students & Staff

16. Paraeducators are expected to demonstrate constructive interpersonal skills with students and other team members (e.g., use respectful communication when speaking with or about others; maintain confidentiality; ensure dignity when providing personal care).
17. Paraeducators should develop and demonstrate attitudes and work habits that encourage student independence; foster appropriate interdependence; promote inclusion and peer interactions; enhance each students' self-image; and prevent the unintended negative effects often associated with the potential over-involvement and proximity of adults.

Roles & Responsibilities of Paraeducators

18. Within the classroom, on a day-to-day basis, the classroom teacher is the instructional leader and interacts directly on an ongoing basis with students who have disabilities. Paraeducators, under the direction of the teacher and special educators, function as vital support to students under the direction of the teacher and special educators.

19. Teachers, special educators, and related services providers (e.g., speech/language pathologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, school psychologists) have the ultimate responsibility for ensuring the appropriate design, implementation, and evalua-

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Developing a Shared Understanding

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tion of instruction carried out by paraeducators.

20. Paraeducators should be informed about the educational needs (e.g., IEP goals and objectives; components of the general education curriculum) and characteristics of the students with whom they work, as well as classroom and school practices and routines.
21. Paraeducators should have opportunities to contribute to the development of the educational program, instructional plans, and activities created by each student's educational team, but should not be given sole responsibility for these and related activities.
22. Some of the primary functions of paraeducators are to: support the implementation of instructional programs; facilitate learning activities; collect student data; and carry out other assigned duties (e.g., supervise students at lunch or recess; provide personal care supports to students; do clerical tasks) based on plans developed by the teachers and special educators.
23. Times and mechanisms should be established to allow opportunities for paraeducators to be oriented to teacher's plans, report on student progress, ask questions, and offer their perspectives.

Supervision & Evaluation of Paraeducator Services

24. Paraeducators should receive ongoing supervision and regular performance evaluations which are based on their job descriptions and apply clearly defined processes and procedures.
25. Supervisors of paraeducators (e.g., teachers; special educators) should be trained in effective supervisory practices through preservice, inservice, or graduate training.
26. Paraeducator services should be considered in school and district-level school improvement action-planning to ensure that appropriate services are available and effectively utilized.
27. When a student is receiving support from a paraeducator, an evaluation plan should be established to determine, if possible, how and when paraeducator services can be faded through increased student independence or replaced by more naturally occurring supports (e.g., classroom teacher, peers).
28. School districts should develop ways to evaluate the impact of paraeducator services on individual students, classrooms, and staff.

For additional information on the points highlighted in this article, visit the following websites:
http://www.uvm.edu/~uapvt/parasupport/
http://www.uvm.edu/~uapvt/paraprep/

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Respect, Appreciation, and Acknowledgment of Paraprofessionals Who Support Students with Disabilities

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ABSTRACT: *This article describes the experiences of 103 school personnel, including classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, special educators, and administrators who worked in four schools, Grades K-12. Data were collected during 22 school visits and 56 individual interviews. Six themes were identified pertaining to how school personnel think about and act upon, issues of respect, appreciation, and acknowledgment of paraprofessionals who work in general education classrooms supporting students with and without disabilities. The themes included (a) nonmonetary signs and symbols of appreciation, (b) compensation, (c) being entrusted with important responsibilities, (d) noninstructional responsibilities, (e) wanting to be listened to, and (f) orientation and support. The article concludes with a discussion of implications for how these data might be applied in schools.*

Stand-up comedian Rodney Dangerfield, is famous for his signature line, "I don't get no respect!" [sic] He made a career building his humor on the notion that he was not respected and was underappreciated by virtually everyone—his wife, his kids, his boss, his friends, even total strangers. We cannot help but wonder, are paraprofessionals the Rodney Dangerfields of public education? We have been prompted to ask this question because we have heard a steady stream of comments from paraprofessionals over a period of several years regarding their perceptions about receiving respect, appreciation, and acknowledgment. We decided it was time to study this issue more systematically.

There is no dispute that paraprofessionals are an integral part of the educational landscape. Nowhere is the critical role of paraprofessionals more evident than in general education classes where students with disabilities are being included with classmates who do not have disabilities (Doyle, 1997; Freschi, 1999; Wadsworth & Knight, 1996).

Over the past decade, the literature on paraprofessionals has been dominated by nondatabased articles and books that primarily addressed topics such as role clarification, orientation and training, hiring and assigning, and supervision (Boomer, 1994; French & Pickett, 1997; Hilton & Gerlach, 1997; Jones & Bender, 1993; Palma, 1994; Parsons & Reid, 1999; Pickett & Gerlach, 1997; Salzberg & Morgan, 1995; Steckelberg & Vasa, 1998). A smaller subset of the nondatabased literature specifically addressed paraprofessional supports for students with disabilities within general education classrooms (Brown, Farrington, Ziegler, Knight, & Ross, 1999; Doyle, 1997; Giangreco, Broer, & Edelman, 1999; Hammeken, 1996; Kotkin, 1995; Palladino, Cornoldi, Vianello, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 1999) and other integrated settings such as community-based work sites (Rogan & Held, 1999). Except for somewhat standard statements about their importance, we identified a lone, three-page, nondatabased article that focused the issues of respect, appreciation, or acknowledgment of paraprofessionals (Palma).

Similarly, the databased literature does not substantially address the issues of respect, appreciation, or acknowledgment of paraprofessionals. This literature also has been dominated by topics such as role clarification (French & Chopra, 1999; Lamont & Hill, 1991; Welch, Richards, Okada, Richards, & Prescott, 1995), training (Hall, McClannahan, & Krantz, 1995), and paraprofessionals' interactions with students (Giangreco, Edelman, Luiselli, & MacFarland, 1997; Marks, Schrader & Levine, 1999; Shukla, Kennedy, & Cushing, 1999; Storey, Smith, & Strain, 1993).

In their study of three rural states, Passaro, Pickett, Latham, and HongBo (1994) reported paraprofessional shortages and attrition that were attributed to a variety of factors, one of which was perceived lack of respect. Other key factors identified could also be viewed as being related to lack of respect; these included low wages, limited opportunities for advancement, and lack of administrative support. In identifying them as critical members of educational teams, Hofmeister, Ashbaker, and Morgan (1996) reported low job satisfaction among paraprofessionals. A study by Prest (1993) explored the relationship between the job satisfaction of instructional assistants and the leadership behaviors of the teachers with whom they worked. Prest found that the actions of the professional staff who directed the work of paraprofessionals had a significant impact on the job satisfaction of those paraprofessionals.

These studies highlight the importance of considering various aspects of respect, appreciation, and acknowledgment of paraprofessionals as important factors in attracting and retaining them. These data also suggest that respect and acknowledgment extends beyond a "pat on the back," words or encouragement, or other symbolic gestures of appreciation. Rather, the extent of respect, appreciation, and acknowledgment of paraprofessionals that contributes to job satisfaction is reflected in many other factors such as compensation, role clarification, training opportunities, supervision, and support.

Retaining a productive work force has long been linked with job satisfaction (Lashbrook, 1997). Meta-analyses of job satisfaction studies in educational organizations indicated the largest mean effect sizes for relationships between overall job satisfaction and both role ambiguity and role conflict (Thompson, McNamara, & Hoyle, 1997). This finding has relevance to paraprofessionals since their job satisfaction and perceptions of appreciation are inextricably linked with decades of literature that has highlighted their changing roles and continuing lack of role clarity (Jones & Bender, 1993).

Attracting and retaining paraprofessionals who experience productive levels of job satisfaction is an important part of building the continuity of a school's capacity to support students with disabilities within general education classrooms. Retaining paraprofessionals who are satisfied with their work (a) allows inservice training resources to be used more effectively; (b) creates opportunities for teachers, special educators, and paraprofessionals to develop con-

The data-based literature does not substantially address the issues of respect, appreciation, or acknowledgment of paraprofessionals.

structive working relationships; (c) allows school administrators to make strategic staffing decisions; and (d) provides continuity for students with disabilities and their families.

The data presented in this article helps fill the gap in the research literature pertaining to paraprofessionals who support students with disabilities in general education classrooms. It does this by describing how paraprofessionals serving students with a wide range of characteristics and disabilities across the Grades from K-12, think about the issues of respect, appreciation, and acknowledgment. It explores these same issues from the perspectives of the teachers, special educators, and administrators who work with them. It is our hope that understanding these issues more fully will allow school personnel to create and improve working conditions for paraprofessionals that allow them to enhance their contributions to collaborative teams serving students with and without disabilities in general education classrooms and other inclusive environments.

METHOD

SETTING

This study was conducted in four schools in Vermont. These schools were selected because they (a) were part of the same K-12 system, (b) had a history of including a full range of students with disabilities in general education classrooms, and (c) employed paraprofessionals to provide educational supports for students with and without disabilities. Three of the schools (Grades K-2, 3-5, and 6-8) were part of a K-8 school district. The number of students in these schools ranged from 430 to 526. Older students from this district attended a union high school (Grades 9-12), which also received students from two other districts. This high school served 1,410 students. Across the schools, approximately 5% of the students were from culturally diverse backgrounds. Approximately 10% of the students in the schools received free or reduced lunch. Class size across all four schools averaged in the low 20s.

Attracting and retaining paraprofessionals who experience productive levels of job satisfaction are important parts of building the continuity of a school's capacity to support students with disabilities within general education classrooms.

STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Data were collected from 103 individuals, including 41 general education teachers, 38 paraprofessionals, 14 special educators (2 of whom were speech-language pathologists), and 10 school administrators (i.e., superintendent, special education administrators, principals, and assistant principals). There were approximately the same number of participants from each of the four schools.

DATA COLLECTION

Two sources of data were collected throughout the 1998-1999 school year, semistructured interviews and observations. Approximately 22% of the study participants ($n = 23$) were both interviewed and observed. Approximately 46% ($n = 47$) were observed only. The remaining 32% ($n = 33$) of the participants were interviewed only.

Semistructured Interviews. Fifty-six individual, semistructured interviews were conducted, ranging in length from 35 to 120 min; most lasted between 45 to 60 min. Participants interviewed included 17 teachers, 17 paraprofessionals, 12 special educators, and 10 school administrators. All interviews were audiotaped with written permission from the participants and transcribed verbatim. Six of the interview transcripts were incomplete because the recorder was inadvertently set to "voice activation," causing lapses in recording.

A topical interview guide was used as the basis for all interviews. The topics were identified through current professional literature pertaining to paraprofessionals in general education classrooms (Giangreco, CichoskiKelly et al., 1999; Giangreco, Edelman et al. 1997; Pickett & Gerlach, 1997). Questions addressed the following paraprofessional topics: (a) acknowledging their work, (b) training, (c) hiring and assigning, (d) interactions with students and teachers, (e) roles and responsibilities, (f) supervision, and (g) impact of paraprofessional support.

Observations. A total of 51 hr of observation were conducted during 22 school visits. Seventy school personnel were directly observed in typical school settings (e.g., classrooms, labs, hallways, cafeteria, gymnasium, and school yard) and activities (e.g., large group lessons, small group lessons, independent work, transitions between classes, and meetings). Field notes were recorded for all observations. Interview transcripts and observation field notes consisted of approximately 2,000 pages of double-spaced text data.

DATA ANALYSIS

The first author analyzed the observational and interview data inductively using categorical coding (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Transcripts were read and marked by hand using 76 initial codes using words descriptive of text content. Particularly descriptive passages were highlighted and separate notes were maintained on emerging themes. Each transcript was imported from a word processing program into *HyperQual3* (Padilla, 1999), a computer application designed to assist in sorting qualitative data. Each transcript was reread and data were rearranged into 24 codes. *HyperQual3* was used to sort the data by code into 24 code-specific reports. Inductive analysis (Bogdan & Biklen) was applied to the code-specific reports to assist in the identification of themes.

During the spring of 2000, participants who had been interviewed were sent a draft version of the methods and findings of the study and asked to provide feedback on the accuracy of the data and whether individual anonymity was maintained. Responses were received from over 75% (*n* = 42) of the 56 interviewees. There were 7 to 12 respondents from each of the four role categories (i.e., paraprofessionals, *n* = 12; teachers, *n* = 12; special educators, *n* = 11; administrators, *n* = 7). Their feedback was used to edit the final version of the study.

FINDINGS

The desire to receive respect, feel appreciated, and have their contributions acknowledged was a significant issue for many of the paraprofessionals that affected their reported job satisfaction. Virtually all the professionals in this study recognized this aspect of job satisfaction. A special educator explained, "What I am hearing them (paraprofessionals) saying more than anything, is that they want what they do to be validated and valued." School administrators and faculty were nearly unanimous in their praise of the paraprofessional staff. As a teacher explained, "I value her (the paraprofessional) immensely." An administrator concurred, "Each and every principal and assistant principal, I think, really appreciates what these folks do."

The following sections present six themes, each of which addresses a different aspect of respect, appreciation, and acknowledgment of the work of paraprofessionals. These six themes include (a) nonmonetary signs and symbols of appreciation, (b) compensation, (c) being entrusted with important responsibilities, (d) noninstructional responsibilities, (e) wanting to be listened to, and (f) orientation and support.

NONMONETARY SIGNS AND SYMBOLS OF APPRECIATION: "I SAY 'THANK YOU!' EVERY DAY."

Administrators and teachers reported most frequently acknowledging paraprofessionals by offering positive comments to them about their work. As one classroom teacher shared:

> I know it seems kind of small, but I thank them every single solitary day. I thank them for supporting me and helping me. I tell them they are an important part of what we are doing in the classroom and that I couldn't do it without them.

One administrator described writing a memo to a paraprofessional after observing her work with students. "I wrote her a full-page memo and told her that she wasn't teaching, she was performing magic! That means a lot to people." The contributions of paraprofessionals also were acknowledged through other symbolic gestures such as appreciation luncheons, small gifts, or public recognition, such as an article in the school paper, a nameplate on the classroom door along with the teacher's, or an award for outstanding service. Simultaneously, administrators and teachers, acknowledging the busy nature of schools, said, "We don't do it (acknowledge paraprofessionals) enough."

While paraprofessionals said they appreciated kind words and other signs of appreciation offered by school faculty, they qualified this by explaining it was most meaningful when it came from people whom they perceived to be very knowledgeable about their work. Generally this included teachers, special educators, the parents of the students with whom they worked most closely, and the students themselves: "I think the kids do a lot of that for us (help us feel valued)."

Straightforward statements of appreciation such as, "You're doing a great job!" could have widely differing meanings. Paraprofessionals explained that sometimes such statements from teachers meant that the paraprofessional was doing a good job carrying out a plan the teacher had developed (e.g., a small group language arts activity). At other times paraprofessionals explained that such statements meant that the teacher was thankful that the paraprofessional was handling a challenging situation that otherwise would be left to the teacher or special educator to address. As one paraprofessional shared,

> The teachers see me in the hall when a kid is out of control. And I'll get him calmed down and back in the classroom. And they are happy, like "Nice job!" and just give me a little pat on the back or say, "Hey, you are doing a great job! "

Several of the teachers and special educators welcomed this assistance as a "relief" when they described their own workloads as "extremely busy" and at times "overwhelming."

Compliments coming from principals, central office administrators, and school board members reportedly were not as meaningful because those individuals, with a few exceptions, were perceived by paraprofessionals as not being as knowledgeable about their work. Paraprofessionals expressed hope that their contributions would be truly understood and valued by a wider range of people. As one paraprofessional explained,

> This year my goal was to try to make people aware at the school board and in the administration about the physical and the emotional energy this job really entails. I really feel that it's not valued. It's not intentional, it's just the awareness is not there.

COMPENSATION: "I THINK WE ARE WORTH MORE THAN WE'RE BEING PAID."

Although most of the administrators acknowledged the limitations of the pay scale, they cited the comparability of pay to other schools in the region and a "good benefits package" (e.g., health insurance, and funds to take college courses) as signs of acknowledgment that paraprofessionals are valued. It was the general perception among administrators that "by and large I think paraeducators feel like they are supported and respected."

Paraprofessionals expressed perceptions about compensation as an indicator of their perceived value within the school and community that differed from those of administrators. Although the paraprofessionals spoke positively about their fringe benefits, virtually all of them expressed dissatisfaction with their wages and some perceived their wages as a sign of disrespect: "It (starting pay of $7/hr) is an insult." Several said that low wages left them feeling "taken advantage of." Others spoke about the wage topic using apologetic language: "I almost feel guilty even saying it, but I think we are worth more than we are being paid." Although most of the paraprofessionals said that given their responsibilities, higher wages were warranted, most decided to stay on the job because of their positive relationships with students and school colleagues so long as they had other resources (e.g., spousal income) sufficient to support their families.

Paraprofessionals expressed hope that their contributions would be truly understood and valued by a wider range of people.

BEING ENTRUSTED WITH IMPORTANT RESPONSIBILITIES: "THAT'S WHY I'M GETTING MORE RESPECT."

One of the main factors identified as contributing to many paraprofessionals' feeling that they were respected was being entrusted with important, high-level instructional responsibilities. As one paraprofessional explained,

> I'm very confident right now because I know the trust we have (as a team) and that they (the teachers) can give me a group of students to work with and they know the job is going to get done, and there aren't going to be any problems.

Another paraprofessional offered, "I personally have more responsibility put on me, which may very well be the reason that I'm getting more respect and receiving more compliments and signs of respect than maybe some other paras would."

Administrators, teachers, and special educators said that the abilities of paraprofessionals to engage in higher level instructional tasks varied widely. After observing several paraprofessionals over a period of years, one teacher explained:

> Sometimes I say, "Man, they are really good! They are teaching!" And then there are other ones who have trouble. The paras say, "I don't know how to do this. I'm supposed to help my student with math, but I don't know math. I don't know how to do this!"

In cases where those working in paraprofessional roles were college educated or certified teachers, the faculty expressed more confidence in giving them instructional responsibilities. While some administrators viewed this practice as economical and a good value to the school, it left some of the paraprofessionals feeling underpaid. They felt they were doing teacher-level work for paraprofessional pay and under the lower status of a paraprofessional, rather than job designation of a professional teacher.

Another set of paraprofessionals, particularly those assigned to classroom programs, who had received extensive on-the-job training over a period of several years, also were perceived by faculty as being capable of carrying out instructional tasks. While this tutelage was effective in some cases, one of the teachers thought, "By the time you train a para in the skills of a teacher, you might as well have hired a teacher."

Administrators, teachers, and special educators said that the abilities of paraprofessionals to engage in higher level instructional tasks varied widely.

Other paraprofessionals reportedly were given instructional responsibilities, but without adequate training or support. This occurred most frequently in situations where paraprofessionals were assigned to individual students with complex, low-incidence disabilities (e.g., severe emotional disturbance, multiple disabilities, mental retardation, and autism). As a classroom teacher stated, "You are giving the unqualified or underprepared people a high needs child to work with. Does that seem like a paradox? Hello?!" Respondents considered the skillfulness of some paraprofessionals in carrying out instructional responsibilities questionable and the practice inadvisable.

Providing acknowledgment to paraprofessionals by having them engage in high-level instructional tasks can sometimes present challenges. The lines between the roles of professionals and paraprofessionals become blurred. As one respondent said, "It seems that as they do a better and better job, teachers tend to give them more and more responsibility, more and more latitude. So you see them becoming almost quasi-teachers rather than paraeducators." Other teachers, cognizant of the wages earned by paraprofessionals, hesitated to give them high-level responsibilities: "Given the (low) salary they get, I don't ever feel like I have the right to put that responsibility (high-level instructional tasks) on them." Another respondent illustrated a challenge by sharing the following situation:

> There may be times that they (paraprofessionals) are doing planning, but that's not what we expect from them. So when that happens we try to intercede. There was an incident a couple of years ago where a paraeducator came here from another school and it got to the

> point where it was pretty sticky. Because in her mind she was that student's primary teacher, even though she wasn't. It took four hard-nosed meetings to get the point across that she had to implement (what the professionals had planned). Because some things she was doing weren't right for the child.

NONINSTRUCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES: "I DON'T WANT TO BE PUT IN THE SAME CATEGORY AS SOMEONE WHO TAKES DOWN BULLETIN BOARDS."

While the paraprofessionals reported valuing their instructional responsibilities as an important and primary aspect of their job, the majority also expressed comfort with their other roles (e.g., clerical duties, general supervision of students in the cafeteria, preparing materials, and providing personal care supports to students). A smaller number discussed their roles as exclusively instructional and sought to distance themselves from tasks they perceived to be noninstructional.

A paraprofessional explained, "That's why value and acknowledgment (of my instructional role) is so important to me, because I don't want to be put in the same category as somebody who takes down bulletin boards and runs papers all day long." Some paraprofessionals in the K-8 system reported feeling "devalued" because as part of contract negotiations they were grouped with cafeteria workers and custodial staff: "Now to me that's no acknowledgment ... after working so hard to establish the fact that we are involved in education."

In the K-8 district there was a systemwide emphasis on increasing the instructional roles of paraprofessionals and minimizing their clerical roles. Having paraprofessionals engage in clerical roles "is very frowned upon in this district" (teacher). In part, minimizing their clerical roles was done to direct more human resources toward instruction, but it also was seen as a sign of respect for paraprofessionals. Some teachers abided by this approach closely: "My paraprofessional does not do my clerical work nor will she ever. I do it. That is my job. Some people don't agree with that."

Other teachers viewed noninstructional responsibilities such as clerical work differently, as valued and important roles. As one respondent said:

> What really bothers me is the negativism about doing clerical work. We have this stigma (about paraprofessionals doing clerical work) and having to work directly with students. Sometimes relieving a teacher of a lot of clerical stuff so that they can work with students is as valuable, if not more valuable than having the paraeducator work with the student.

Several teachers concurred that having paraprofessionals do copying and other clerical work "would take a tremendous load off" and give the teachers "more quality time with children." In situations where teachers and paraprofessionals abided closely to the perceived directive not to have paraprofessionals engaged in clerical tasks, some teachers found the results ironic. Teachers explained that paraprofessionals who were less trained and less qualified were instructing students while:

> We are paying teachers big bucks to stand in the copy room and run off copies. Teachers don't do this during their class time; it's during their prep time, as if they have nothing else to do. They are doing it before school, after school, on weekends. They are putting in extra time and doing it on their own time.

Although not reflected in differentiated job descriptions or wages in the K-8 schools, some paraprofessionals talked about how they perceived other paraprofessionals differently based on their noninstructional roles. Paraprofessionals, particularly those assigned one-to-one to provide personal care supports (e.g., changing diapers, dressing students, and feeding students) to students with severe disabilities, were perceived by a small subset of general classroom/program paraprofessionals as being engaged in roles that they considered undesirable and inconsistent with "what teachers do." Some of the paraprofessionals consistently used language to highlight the distinction: "She's a para (engaged in instruction), not a one-on-one (engaged in personal care support)." A general educator confirmed the perception: "They (program paraprofessionals) don't like changing diapers."

An administrator at the high school explained that paraprofessionals who provide personal care supports to students with disabilities have differentiated job descriptions and receive slightly higher wages than the entry-level paraprofessionals. This was an example of an overall approach to differentiated job roles and wage levels for paraprofessionals at the high school: "There's a job description for all the positions, each clearly defined with the competencies" (administrator).

WANTING TO BE LISTENED TO: "PARAEDUCATORS' VOICES ARE PRETTY WELL HEARD."

Paraprofessionals expressed a desire to have ongoing input about the educational programs for the students with whom they worked. They reported the extent to which their input was considered and acted upon by the educational teams as an indicator of how much or little they felt respected and valued. Paraprofessionals who worked with individual students reasoned that since they typically spent more time with a student with disabilities than any of the teachers or special educators, an assertion confirmed during our observations, they "know the student best" and therefore should have their input seriously considered. A comment from a middle school teacher captured a sentiment of several teachers by stating that paraprofessionals are "adults who have some common sense and also have some wisdom and knowledge to add to whatever goes on (in school)," regardless of their educational backgrounds.

Paraprofessionals and teaching faculty expressed a variety of perspectives on how and when paraprofessionals offer input. Most respondents indicated that the informal daily exchange among school personnel worked well. As a teacher commented, "I think paraeducators' voices are pretty well heard in terms of recommendations."

The major concern expressed by some paraprofessionals pertained to their opportunities to offer input during team meetings. When team meetings were scheduled during the school day, often the paraprofessional was not included because, as one paraprofessional explained, "We more or less end up watching the class while the team meets." This left some of the paraprofessionals feeling that they were not valued as full members of the team.

In the K-8 schools, when team meetings were scheduled after school hours, paraprofessionals typically were told that they were welcome to attend, but were not required to do so. Since these meetings were held at times that extended beyond the paraprofessionals' paid hours of employment they could attend, but without pay. This also left some paraprofessionals feeling devalued because they were not being offered compensation for participation in team meetings. The result of this practice, according to one principal, was that "occasionally the para will be there (at an after school team meeting); rarely are they. They are out the door at 2:30 because they are paid hourly."

For many paraprofessionals, not attending team meetings was a practice with which they felt comfortable: "For the most part, they (teachers and special educators) just tell me what happened and I feel comfortable with it." Some did not want to stay after school regardless of payment. As one paraprofessional stated, "It (staying after school hours) interferes with one of the main reasons some took the job." On occasion some paraprofessionals attended meetings without pay: "I was willing to stay after school because it was so important to me" (paraprofessional).

Paraprofessionals expressed a desire to have ongoing input about the educational programs for the students with whom they worked.

ORIENTATION AND SUPPORT: "PARAEDUCATORS ARE KIND OF THROWN INTO THINGS."

Paraprofessionals reported that the extent to which they were oriented to their job and provided with ongoing support were indicators to them of value and respect. An administrator concurred: "We are not showing them respect if we are not equipping them with the training they need." When paraprofessionals experienced a thorough orientation and ongoing support, it helped them to feel valued because the implied message was that their job was important enough for a professional to take that time with them.

Planned orientation did occur for a small number of the paraprofessionals. In more cases the professional staff acknowledged: "Paraeducators are kind of thrown into things here. In terms of a really structured orientation process, it's not here." A high school faculty member agreed: "Orientation is on the run."

Lack of sufficient orientation resulted in questions and comments from paraprofessionals that ranged from, "Where's the bathroom?" and "How do I get a student out of a wheelchair without injuring my back?" to "I've got recess duty and I don't know what I am supposed to do!" Several paraprofessionals reported being unaware of a student's disability, how the disability affected learning, or a student's individualized education program (IEP) goals. As one paraprofessional who worked one-on-one with a student with disabilities explained, "There was a time I was not aware that I should be working on the IEP (goals and objectives); I had no clue. After I read the IEP and a letter from the parents I really understood the child so much better."

Some paraprofessionals reported being well-supported and spoke in glowing terms about the "excellent" ongoing support they received from either the classroom teachers or special educators. Most paraprofessionals who were assigned to a classroom rather than an individual student reported forming a "team" with the classroom teacher and having support. Paraprofessionals who did not feel they received this type of support were primarily those assigned to individual students with disabilities. Some of these paraprofessionals reported feeling "dumped on" when asked to work with students who had intensive needs (e.g., challenging behaviors, communication difficulties, and physical disabilities) with minimal support:

> My first year was very hard because I didn't know anything at all about my student. I got on the phone with the special ed person: "What am I supposed to do?'" "What is our next step?" I asked everybody because I was unsure.

There were two reasons that were most commonly mentioned to explain why some of the paraprofessionals working with the students with most severe disabilities received the least ongoing support. First, special educator caseload size and the number of paraprofessionals they were expected to supervise were identified as barriers to meet existing needs: "There aren't enough hours in the day" (special educator). Second, several respondents said it was their belief that both teachers and special educators were not well-trained in educating students with severe disabilities. Therefore, their ability to support paraprofessionals with these types of students was limited.

DISCUSSION

These data clearly demonstrate that issues pertaining to respect, appreciation, and acknowledgment of paraprofessionals run far deeper than the occasional pat-on-the-back or annual appreciation luncheon. They highlight the importance of this issue to paraprofessionals' job satisfaction and verify that the meaning that they, and the professionals with whom they work, attach to their experiences in schools varies widely. It should be noted that these data are limited to the four schools that were studied. Any generalization to other situations should be approached cautiously, especially given the local geographic scope of the sites and the similarity of the schools' demographic characteristics.

These data suggest that professional educators and administrators should not underestimate the importance of offering symbolic signs of appreciation to paraprofessionals. At the same time, it is vital to recognize that such gestures are only the most visible manifestation of a more complex set of interrelated issues. The impact of symbolic signs of appreciation on their job satisfaction may be reduced in situations where paraprofessionals believe that other aspects of their employment experience (e.g., compensation, orientation, opportunities for training, and ongoing support) are inconsistent with the symbolic forms of appreciation they receive (Passaro et al., 1994; Prest, 1993).

Some paraprofessionals report feeling a lack of respect because they are not treated like a teacher by being given instructional responsibilities. One of our collective challenges is to communicate the value of *all of the roles* played by paraprofessionals, not just the instructional ones. Having paraprofessionals engage in clerical roles can create time for teacher assessment, planning, or teamwork. We especially need to affirm the value of providing personal care supports (e.g., bathroom, dressing, positioning, mobility, and eating supports) for students with the most severe and multiple disabilities as a valued role. Unless we establish and communicate the importance of engaging in such roles (e.g., access, health, personal dignity, and readiness for learning), we risk the danger that the devaluing of the roles inadvertently may result in the devaluing of the students for whom those supports are provided.

The issue of compensation continues to be tricky for school administrators and paraprofessionals alike. This extends beyond the obvious issues such as the need for paraprofessionals to earn a livable wage and the needs of school administrators to maintain and improve educational quality while responding to community pressures to keep escalating costs in check, especially as they pertain to special education.

We think there is little doubt that there is a substantial subset of paraprofessionals who provide work output that far surpasses their current compensation. At the same time, the compensation dilemma raises related questions that cut to the core of strategic educational planning and budgeting: Does it make sense to continue to hire more paraprofessional staff to provide instruction and engage in other teacher-level duties? When paraprofessionals are hired, are schools investing the time and resources to train and support them? How is special educators' work impacted when they are asked to supervise increasing numbers of paraprofessionals while spending correspondingly less time with students? And if schools make the investment to really train and support paraprofessionals to the level that would allow them to provide quality instruction, would a school have been better off hiring a certified teacher or special educator from the outset? These are not easy questions to answer and are further complicated by the data presented in this study that indicates that many paraprofessionals feel more respected when they are entrusted with important responsibilities, such as instruction of students.

These questions bring us back to the central issue that has been discussed in the literature for decades and now has an added twist with the advent of inclusive schooling for students with disabilities. What *are* the appropriate roles of paraprofessionals supporting students with disabilities in general education classrooms? Based on these data, and our own experiences, we suspect there is a substantial gap between the roles that are consistently set forth in the professional literature as exemplary practices (Demchak & Morgan, 1998; Doyle, 1997; Pickett, 1999; Pickett & Gerlach, 1997) and the realities of what they actually do.

There seems to be general agreement in the field that paraprofessionals should be trained for the tasks they perform, oriented to their roles, carry out plans that have been developed by qualified professionals, and receive support and supervision on an ongoing basis (Doyle, 1997; Pickett & Gerlach, 1997). Yet, some are doing the core planning for students with disabilities, conducting formal and informal assessments, making adaptations for students, and making many instructional decisions (Downing, Ryndak, & Clark, 2000; Giangreco, Broer, & Edelman, 1999; Marks et al., 1999). They do this not out of their own desire for control, but because too often professionals have failed to provide the plans, training, and support that is needed. This raises other questions. Should we train and compensate paraprofessionals for

The issue of compensation continues to be tricky for school administrators and paraprofessionals alike.

What are the appropriate roles of paraprofessionals supporting students with disabilities in general education classrooms?

doing these teacher-level responsibilities? Or, as suggested by Brown et al. (1999), should we identify the conditions that led to these roles being assumed by untrained paraprofessionals in the first place, and ensure that all students, including those with disabilities, have full access to qualified teachers and special educators?

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

A major implication affecting paraprofessionals' perceptions about respect and appreciation is the extent to which professional and paraprofessional staff share expectations about paraprofessional roles and work activities. For example, when a paraprofessional values engaging in instructional roles such as implementing a small group reading lesson, and the teacher assigns such a role, there is a match of expectations. When a paraprofessional feels reluctant to implement certain types of instruction, such as math, and the teacher concurs, reasoning that the paraprofessional is not trained or paid for such a role, their expectations match. When the expectations of team members match, there is a greater likelihood that paraprofessionals will feel appreciated, respected, and not taken advantage of since there is individually agreed upon role clarity.

Conversely, when team members do not share the same role expectations, there is a greater likelihood that these mismatches will adversely affect a paraprofessional's job satisfaction (Thompson et al., 1997). For example, some teachers expect paraprofessionals to function in an instructional capacity. Some paraprofessionals do not want that responsibility and feel taken advantage of because they are being asked to engage in teacher-level work, yet are paid so much less than teachers. Others may feel a lack of respect if they were not offered sufficient training or ongoing support for an instructional role. Another type of mismatch occurs when the teacher, cognizant of the paraprofessionals' low pay, purposefully puts minimal instructional responsibilities on the paraprofessional, when the paraprofessional actually wants that responsibility regardless of his or her compensation.

The implication for school personnel is that it is important to establish three different, interrelated types of matches among team members. The first match is that all team members should share the same understanding and expectations about the roles of the paraprofessional. These roles likely will vary across individual paraprofessional assignments and from teacher to teacher—therefore, they must be individually determined. Further, identified roles should be consistent with the distinction between the roles of teachers, special educators, and paraprofessionals. For example, paraprofessionals appropriately could be asked to implement specialized instruction for a student with disabilities that has been designed and supervised by the special educator and classroom teacher. Conversely, it would be inappropriate to ask a paraprofessional to independently design specialized instructional programs for students with disabilities.

Second, there should be a match between the agreed upon paraprofessionals' roles and the skills, training, and support they have to engage in those roles. For example, if a paraprofessional is asked to support a student in algebra, he or she should be competent in algebra. If a paraprofessional is asked to implement specialized instruction, he or she should receive specific training and ongoing support in how to implement such instruction. Providing training and support that match an appropriate paraprofessional role tangibly demonstrates respect and value for paraprofessionals. It sends the message that the individual's work is important enough to warrant such attention, training, and support because it is vital to the operation of the educational program.

Assuming appropriate roles and corresponding skills, training, and support have been agreed to and acted upon, the third area of matching pertains to compensation. Theoretically, most paraprofessionals will not have the skills, training, or role expectations of more highly trained professional staff, and therefore,

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will not be paid at the same level as teachers, special educators, and related services providers. At the same time, if schools expect to attract and retain a qualified work force of paraprofessionals, they must expect to establish better alignment between the work of trained paraprofessionals and their compensation.

Regardless of which direction the field or individual schools head, it is clear that paraprofessionals do important work in classrooms supporting students with and without disabilities. They deserve respect, appreciation, and acknowledgment in tangible ways, such as appropriate role clarification, training, support, compensation, and opportunities for input in schools. It is in our collective best interest, particularly the interests of students, parents, and teachers, to ensure that paraprofessionals are not allowed to be, or become, the Rodney Dangerfields of public education.

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Unit 1
Activity Sheets and To Do Lists

Welcoming, Acknowledging and Orienting Paraeducators

Participant Activity "To Do" List

Activity: Welcome Letter

1. Form a group of two or three members.

2. Assign appropriate roles (e.g., facilitator, recorder, reporter).

3. Generate a written list of thoughts about:
   - why paraeducators are so important,
   - how they contribute to the classroom,
   - how they make your job better, and
   - how they make a difference.

   (10 minutes)

4. Be prepared to share your list with the large group. (10 minutes)

5. Each participant may use the information generated to write a letter of appreciation to paraeducators with whom he or she works. The letter is designed to welcome them, acknowledge their importance, and express appreciation for their work. If you don't have a paraeducator to write such a letter to, you can invent, and write to, a "fantasy" person you think is the world's most incredible paraeducator. (10 minutes)

Participant Activity "To Do" List

Activity: Welcoming and Acknowledging

1. Form a group of five members.

2. Assign appropriate roles (e.g., facilitator, recorder, reporter).

3. Make sure you have large chart paper and markers.

4. Using a round-robin format, share and record things group members have actually done or have seen others do to welcome paraeducators in their classroom or acknowledge their importance and value. (10 minutes)

5. Participants will have an opportunity to move about the room to look at the lists of ideas generated by other groups. (3 minutes)

6. Small groups are reconvened and asked to develop more ideas for how they might welcome or acknowledge paraeducators. These ideas should be a "stretch beyond the obvious" and include things they have not done before. Members should defer judgment and strive for a quantity of ideas. All ideas should be recorded. (10 minutes)

7. Each group is given an opportunity to present two or three of its best ideas. (10 minutes)

8. Each individual participant selects at least three ideas he or she will implement as part of the practicum with at least one paraeducator. Participants should use the **Welcoming/Acknowledging** activity sheet in this section to document their plan. (5 minutes)

Welcoming/Acknowledging Ideas

Ideas	For Whom?	When?	Preparation?

Participant Activity "To Do" List

Activity: Orientation

1. Form three groups of approximately equal size.

2. Each group will be assigned one of three categories of orientation content:
    - school
    - classroom
    - students

3. Assign appropriate roles within each group (e.g., facilitator, recorder, reporter).

4. Refer to the activity sheet **Categories of Orientation for Paraeducators**, but save it as a blank page for use during the practicum.

5. For your assigned content area (i.e., school, classroom, students), generate a list of things that the paraeducator should be oriented to as part of the job. The instructor will display an overhead with idea-joggers in case you get stuck. Record on chart paper. (12 minutes)

6. Organize or sequence the list in a way that makes sense to your group. Be prepared to share your work with the whole class. (6 minutes)

7. Each group will have 10 minutes to present its work to the large group. (30 minutes)

8. The instructor will compile each group's work for distribution at the next class session.

Categories of Orientation for Paraeducators

School	Date Completed	Classroom	Date Completed	Student(s)	Date Completed

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WELCOME INTERVIEW

Directions: This interview guide is intended to help team members, particularly the paraprofessional, the general educator, and the special educator, to get to know each other. Take a few minutes over lunch or during a break to ask each other the following questions:

1. What made you choose to work with children and youth in a school environment?

Paraprofessional: ____________________

Special educator: ____________________

General educator: ____________________

Extended team member: ____________________

2. What are your interests, strengths, and talents?

Paraprofessional: ____________________

Special educator: ____________________

General educator: ____________________

Extended team member: ____________________

3. What do you hope students will learn from you?

Paraprofessional: ____________________

Special educator: ____________________

General educator: ____________________

Extended team member: ____________________

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WELCOME INTERVIEW *(continued)*

4. What do you think contributes to making a classroom a positive learning environment?

Paraprofessional: ______________________________

Special educator: ______________________________

General educator: ______________________________

Extended team member: ______________________________

5. Who is the paraprofessional's supervisor? What are the responsibilities of the supervisor? What are the responsibilities of the paraprofessional to the supervisor? (*Note:* If there is more than one supervisor, now is the time to clarify the roles and responsibilities of each in relationship to the paraprofessional.)

Paraprofessional: ______________________________

Special educator: ______________________________

General educator: ______________________________

Extended team member: ______________________________

6. What is your understanding of your role and responsibilities in our classroom, and what are the roles and responsibilities of other team members?

Paraprofessional: ______________________________

Special educator: ______________________________

General educator: ______________________________

Extended team member: ______________________________

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7. Take a few minutes to clarify some of the responsibilities that paraprofessionals are or are not expected to have in the classroom. At this point, focus on general areas related to classroom functioning rather than student-specific responsibilities. The following table might assist you with this discussion.

Paraprofessional can	**Paraprofessional should not**
✎ Prepare student-specific materials ✎ Reinforce teacher-developed lessons ✎ Correct papers	✎ Develop lesson plans alone ✎ Determine student grades ✎ Conduct formal assessments

8. Take a few minutes to clarify some of the responsibilities that general educators are or are not expected to do in the classroom. The following table might assist you with this discussion.

General educator can	**General educator should not**
✎ Prepare student-specific materials ✎ Develop lessons ✎ Provide direct instruction ✎ Correct papers ✎ Communicate with parents	✎ Develop the individualized education program (IEP) alone

9. Take a few minutes to clarify some of the responsibilities that special educators are or are not expected to have in the classroom. The following table might assist you with this discussion.

Special educator can	**Special educator should not**
✎ Prepare student-specific materials ✎ Develop individualized instruction ✎ Provide direct instruction ✎ Design and develop student-specific accommodations ✎ Provide training and support to the general educator and the paraprofessional ✎ Correct papers ✎ Communicate with parents	✎ Develop the IEP alone ✎ Assume the general educator or paraprofessional knows how to design individualized instruction ✎ Leave all of the instruction to the general educator and the paraprofessional

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10. What do you need in order to do your job well? How can team members support you?

Paraprofessional: ______________________________

Special educator: ______________________________

General educator: ______________________________

Extended team member: ______________________________

11. Who is responsible for showing paraprofessionals how to support students with and without disabilities? Specifically, who is responsible for training paraprofessionals? For example, on a given day, the special educator might model specific instructional strategies to be used with the student with disabilities while the general educator shows the paraprofessional how to conduct a practice drill.

Paraprofessional: ______________________________

Special educator: ______________________________

General educator: ______________________________

Extended team member: ______________________________

12. Are there specific issues, questions, or concerns that you feel need to be addressed over the next several days or weeks?

Paraprofessional: ______________________________

Special educator: ______________________________

General educator: ______________________________

Extended team member: ______________________________

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WELCOME INTERVIEW *(continued)*

13. If you could move forward in time to the end of the school year, what would you hope to have experienced, learned, and accomplished during the past year? For yourself? For your students? For your team?

Paraprofessional: ______________________________

Special educator: ______________________________

General educator: ______________________________

Extended team member: ______________________________

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Unit 2

Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities of Paraeducators and Other Team Members

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Participant's Overview

Unit 2: Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities of Paraeducators and Other Team Members

Brief Description of Unit

The purpose of this unit is to provide information about and strategies for clarifying the roles of paraeducators who support the education of students with disabilities in general education settings and those who direct their work (e.g., teachers, special educators, related services providers).

Hours of Instruction (In class format)

3 hours

Unit Objectives

Key: K = Knowledge, S = Skill (Knowledge objectives are addressed through readings and class activities; skill objectives are addressed through practicum activities.

1. Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will understand the roles and responsibilities of paraeducators. (K)
2. Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will know about areas of role controversy regarding paraeducators. (K)
3. Professionals will understand the roles of teachers, special educators, and related services providers in directing the work of paraeducators. (K)
4. Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will demonstrate skills clarifying the roles of paraeducators and their own roles with the educational program. (S)

Preparing for the Unit

Required Readings:

CichoskiKelly, E. (2000). *Roles and responsibilities of paraeducators and other team members.* Unpublished manuscript, Burlington, VT: University of Vermont, Center on Disability and Community Inclusion.

Giangreco, M.F., Edelman, S.W., Luiselli, T.E., & MacFarland, S.Z.C. (1997). Helping or hovering: Effects of instructional assistant proximity on students with disabilities. *Exceptional Children, 64*, 7-18.

Participant Preparation for Unit 2:

- Read the required readings **prior to class.**
- Based on required readings, write two questions that are relevant to you or your situation for discussion in class.
- Bring writing materials for note-taking to class.
- Bring your *Participant's Manual* to class.
- Review the practicum requirements for Unit 2.

Practicum Requirements

You are encouraged to complete the unit's practicum activities each week, between class meetings if possible. Participants must complete at least two of the practicum requirements for Unit 2. An accompanying practicum checklist of the activities can found in the *Forms* section of this manual. In the event that a practicum requirement is not appropriate for your specific professional situation, alternate activities may be substituted based on negotiation with the instructor. The completed practicum checklist must be submitted to the instructor along with corresponding evidence of completed practicum activities.

Evaluation of Participant Learning

Participants are evaluated in three ways: (1) the *Self-Assessment Review* (to be completed after the last class session), (2) attendance and participation in class activities, and (3) completion of practicum requirements.

Suggested Supplemental Resources

Books and Articles

Erwin, E. (1996). Meaningful participation in early childhood general education: Exploring the use of natural supports and adaptive strategies. *Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness, 90*, 400-411.

Fletcher-Campbell, F. (1992). How can we use an extra pair of hands? *British Journal of Special Education, 19*(4), 141-143.

French, N. (1998). Working together: Resource teachers and paraeducators. *Remedial and Special Education, 19*, 357-368.

Giangreco, M.F., Edelman, S.E., Broer, S.M., & Doyle, M.B. (2001). Paraprofessional support of students with disabilities: Literature from the past decade. *Exceptional Children, 68*, 46-64.

National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities. (1999, March). Learning disabilities: Use of paraprofessionals. *ASHA*, 41 (Suppl. 19), 37-46.
Online at http://www.ldonline.org/njcld/paraprof298.html

Web Sites

National Clearinghouse for Paraeducator Resources
http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/CMMR/Clearinghouse.html

National Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services
http://web.gc.cuny.edu/dept/case/nrcp/

Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium
http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/para/

Unit 2 Required Readings

Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities of Paraeducators and Other Team Members

Unit 2 includes two readings to be read in preparation for the second class session. The CichoskiKelly (2000) article was written specifically for an *entry-level* course designed for paraeducators. It is included in this *Teacher Leadership* mini-course as well because it provides a succinct summary of much of the professional literature on the roles and responsibilities of paraeducators and other team members (e.g., special educators, general education teachers, related services personnel). The Giangreco, Edelman, Luiselli, & MacFarland (1997) article is a qualitative research study on the effects of paraeducator proximity on students with disabilities. It provides substantial food for thought regarding how teachers and special educators might direct the work of paraeducators and specifically looks at this issue within the context of the general education classroom. This article is also included in the course for paraeducators. This creates a common information base and opportunities for discussion and planning.

Roles and Responsibilities of Paraeducators and Other Team Members

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Roles and Responsibilities for Paraeducators

Paraeducators who work with students with disabilities in inclusive settings have a variety of roles depending on the unique needs of the students with whom they work. It is important to note that paraeducator roles are subject to state and local regulations and policies; therefore the examples listed below may not pertain to all paraeducators. Examples of paraeducator roles in five main areas include but are not limited to the following:

Implementation of teacher-planned instruction

- implementing plans created by a teacher or supervisor under the direct supervision of such a person;
- monitoring and providing assistance to students during classroom activities;
- supporting students using instructional modifications for lessons prepared by the class teacher;
- assisting the class teacher with scoring of student work;
- checking for work completion;
- reinforcement of skills taught previously;
- communication with student team members about a student's program;
- attending student team meetings to share and receive information about a student's progress or program;
- recording and charting data; and
- preparing instructional materials.

Supervision of students

- at lunchtime;
- at playground and recess;
- as they arrive and depart on buses;
- between classes; and
- in transition between classes.

Clerical and general duties

- operating media materials (e.g., video machines, film projectors);
- creating bulletin board displays;
- photocopying materials;
- taking attendance;

- maintaining daily logs;
- maintaining records;
- ordering and inventorying supplies; and
- setting up and cleaning up after class activities.

Behavioral and social support

- implementing behavioral management plans developed by the teacher or team;
- communicating with team members about a student's program and behaviors;
- observing, recording, and charting a student's behavioral responses; and
- facilitating peer interactions.

Supporting individual student needs

- assisting with individualized student plans in community learning settings;
- carrying out instructional plans for individual students;
- assisting with personal care, including feeding, toileting, and hygiene support;
- assisting students with unique motor or mobility needs; and
- assisting students with unique sensory needs.

Facilitative Characteristics of Paraeducator Roles:

The various roles that paraeducators perform should be designed to facilitate the quality of education for the students with whom they work. Examples of ways that paraeducator roles may facilitate education include but are not limited to the following for the five role areas presented in the previous section.

Implementation of teacher-planned instruction role

- allows for additional learning opportunities for students;
- allows the student additional chances to practice with immediate adult feedback, such as:
  a) by correcting student errors as they occur; and
  b) by giving students encouragement on academic and behavioral goals;
- facilitates teacher-developed instruction for a small group of students or individual students;
- provides individual review time for students; and
- provides additional support for monitoring and evaluating student progress.

Supervision of students role

- allows for safety of students; and
- provides opportunities for social support of students.

Clerical and general duties role

- frees up the teacher from clerical tasks; and

- allows the teacher additional time to assess, plan, and teach students and work with parents and other team members.

Behavioral and social support role

- provides greater reliability of data (given multiple adult observations of student progress);
- provides additional role models to support and reinforce students' behavioral goals; and
- allows for individual attention and support of students.

Supporting individual student needs role

- allows teacher additional time to assess students;
- allows teacher additional time to plan and teach;
- allows for increased student learning opportunities ;
- provides individual attention to students;
- provides assistance with student's personal care and their unique mobility and sensory needs; and
- allows for additional learning environments (e.g., community settings).

Roles and Responsibilities of Other Team Members Who Work with Students Who Have Disabilities

Paraeducators of students who have disabilities may work with a variety of other team members. The roles presented in this section represent ideal practices, but there is some controversy over team members' roles for supporting students with disabilities in general education classes. Therefore, there may be some differences between the information presented here and what the paraeducator observes at his or her school. Examples of the roles of other team members include but are not limited to the following:

Classroom Teacher

Definition: Trained and certified general education teacher who teaches groups of children and youth in one or more curricular areas. Such groups include a wide range of students including those with disabilities.

General educator roles:

- plans, implements, and evaluates instruction for and assesses the students in his or her class;
- adapts learning activities for students, including those with disabilities;
- takes responsibility for the education of each member of the class;
- directs the classroom activities of paraeducators;
- communicates with parents regarding student progress; and
- sets the rules, guidelines, and expectations for the classroom.

Special Educator

Definition: Trained and certified professional who provides specially designed instruction (directly or indirectly) for children and youth with disabilities in the general education classroom.

General classroom special educator roles in relation to students with disabilities:

- functions collaboratively with the classroom teacher to assess, plan, implement, and evaluate instruction for students with disabilities in the general education classroom;
- adapts curriculum, materials, and equipment;
- incorporates individual educational goals for students in classroom activities and interactions;
- oversees the implementation of students' individualized educational programs (IEPs);
- provides academic assessment and observations of student performance;
- provides consultation and training to members of students' educational teams;
- directs the class activities of paraeducators; and
- communicates with parents regarding student progress.

Family Member

Definition: The family is typically represented by one or more parent or any adult who serves in a primary caregiving or decision-making position for the student (e.g., parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings). Family members also include surrogate parents, foster parents, stepparents, guardians, advocates, or any individual who is legally responsible for the student.

Family member roles:

- provides information regarding family values and cultural norms;
- provides information regarding the student's interests, preferences, and priorities;
- provides information regarding the student's strengths and needs;
- provides an understanding of the student's future;
- participates in determining appropriate educational; placement and individually appropriate goals for the child; and
- communicates with members of the student's educational team.

Student Definition: A person with a disability who is the focus of the team's activities.

Student roles:

- provides information regarding personal values and cultural norms;
- provides information regarding personal strengths and needs;
- provides information about personal goals and vision for the future;
- provides information regarding personal interests and preferences;
- selects individually important priorities for annual goals; and
- provides feedback about educational placement, services and programs.

Related Service Provider

Definition: Related services refers to transportation and other developmental, corrective, and support services required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education. Related services include speech-language pathology and audiology services; psychological services; physical and occupational therapy; recreation, including therapeutic recreation; early identification and assessment of disabilities in children; counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling; orientation and mobility services; and medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes. Related services also include social work services in schools, school health services, and parent counseling and training (*Federal Register*, Section 300.24, pp. 12423,12424).

Selected Related Services Roles:

Speech Language Pathologist
Definition: Trained and certified professionals concerned with evaluation, treatment, prevention, and research in human communication and its disorders. Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) provide services for individuals of all ages, from infants to the elderly with speech and language disorders. They diagnose and evaluate speech problems such as stuttering and articulation and language problems. SLPs work with students who have hearing disabilities, learning disabilities, language impairments, and speech articulation and phonologic difficulties (Dennis, Edelman, Giangreco, Rubin, & Thomas, 1999). Speech-language pathologists may also function on a child's educational team as special educators or related service providers.

Speech-Language Pathologist Roles:
Designing, implementing, and evaluating comprehensive treatment plans to:

- help individuals correctly produce speech sounds;
- assist with developing control of the vocal and respiratory systems or correct voice production;
- assist children and adolescents with language problems such as following directions, answering and asking questions, conveying information to others, understanding and using words and grammar, and understanding and using language in a variety of social contexts;
- assist individuals, to increase their fluent speech and cope with stuttering;
- assist individuals who have had strokes or other brain trauma to relearn language and speech skills;
- help individuals to use augmentative and assistive systems of communication;
- counsel individuals with speech and language disorders and their families;
- advise individuals and the community on how to prevent speech and language disorders (adapted from *ASHA*, 9/97);
- adapt curriculum, materials' and equipment;
- incorporate a student's individual educational goals into classroom activities and interactions;
- provide consultation, collaboration, and training to members of a student's educational team;
- direct the class activities of paraeducators; and
- communicate with parents regarding student progress.

Physical Therapist

Definition: The American Physical Therapy Association (1998) defines physical therapists as:

> *"health care professionals who evaluate and treat people with health problems resulting from injury or disease. The physical therapist assesses joint motion, muscle strength and endurance, function of the heart and lungs, and performance of activities required in daily living, among other responsibilities (APTA web site, http://www.apta.org).*

Physical Therapist roles (include but are not limited to):

- addresses functional mobility in order to permit freedom of movement to the greatest extent possible within the educational setting;
- addresses positioning to identify the best positions for learning and for prevention of further disability;
- oversees gross-motor skill performance and coordination in order to allow full participation in the educational program;
- addresses adaptive equipment needs for access and for participation;
- addresses physiological functions related to strength and endurance to allow participation in a full day of educational activity;
- adapts curriculum, materials, and equipment;
- incorporates a student's individual educational goals into classroom activities and interactions;
- provides consultation, collaboration and training to members of the student's educational team;
- directs the class activities of paraeducators; and
- communicates with parents regarding student progress.

Occupational Therapist

Definition: The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) (1997) defines an occupational therapist as:

> *"health professional that utilizes the application of purposeful goal-directed activity in the assessment and treatment of persons with disabilities. In an educational setting, Occupational Therapy uses activity and adapted surroundings to facilitate the student's independent function and to decrease the effects of the handicapping condition on the student's ability to participate in the educational process" (pp.1-2).*

Occupational Therapist Roles:

- participates in screening and evaluation of student needs;
- adapts and teaches daily living skills;
- determines effective adaptive equipment needs;
- provides training in the use of adaptive equipment and materials;
- assists in identifying and accessing resources;
- provides services that complement the work of the physical therapist;
- adapts curriculum, materials, and equipment;

- incorporates a student's individual educational goals into classroom activities and interactions;
- provides consultation, collaboration, and training to members of the student's educational team;
- directs the class activities of paraeducators; and
- communicates with parents regarding student progress.

School Psychologist
Definition: Trained and certified professional who helps teachers, parents, and students to understand, prevent, and solve problems. As a specialty within the profession of psychology, school psychology is founded on respect for the dignity and worth of each student and a commitment to understanding human behavior for the purpose of promoting human welfare. School psychologists are trained to function in a wide range of roles to support the education of students with disabilities (Dennis et al., 1999. p. 57).

School Psychologist Roles:
- administers and interprets standardized tests to determine student eligibility for special education services;
- provides observations of student's school functioning;
- assists with the design, implementation, and evaluation of interventions and behavior change plans;
- supports schools in restructuring and organizational issues;
- conducts psychological and psycho-educational assessments;
- provides individual and group counseling for students ;
- collaborates with educators to provide specific skill-building activities for students;
- provides support for parents, including support groups and counseling;
- provides supervision and training to other school psychologists;
- provides consultation, collaboration, and training to members of the student's educational team;
- directs the class activities of paraeducators; and
- communicates with parents regarding student progress

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Helping or Hovering? Effects of Instructional Assistant Proximity on Students with Disabilities

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ABSTRACT: *This study presents data on the effects of the proximity of instructional assistants on students with multiple disabilities who are placed in general education classrooms. Based on extensive observations and interviews, analyses of the data highlighted eight major findings of educational significance, all related to proximity of instructional assistants. Categories of findings and discussion include (a) interference with ownership and responsibility by general educators, (b) separation from classmates, (c) dependence on adults, (d) impact on peer interactions, (e) limitations on receiving competent instruction, (f) loss of personal control, (g) loss of gender identity, and (h) interference with instruction of other students. The article concludes with implications for practice related to policy development, training, classroom practices, and research.*

As students with disabilities increasingly are placed in general education schools and classes, the use of instructional assistants has greatly expanded. Recent national figures estimate that over 500,000 instructional assistants are employed in public schools, and increases are anticipated in the coming years (Schelble, 1996). Although their changing roles and responsibilities have gained recent attention (Pickett, 1986; Pickett, Faison, & Formanek, 1993), the proliferation of instructional assistants in public schools often has outpaced conceptualization of team roles and responsibilities, as well as training and supervision needs of instructional assistants. Nowhere is this more evident than in schools where students with severe or multiple disabilities are included in general education classrooms.

In our work in public schools, we have noticed instructional assistants playing increasingly prominent roles in the education of students with disabilities. With pressure from parents, who want to ensure that their children are adequately supported, and general educators, who want to make sure they and their students are adequately supported, the use of special education instructional assistants has become a primary mechanism to implement more inclusive schooling practices. Although we have been encouraged by situations where students with disabilities have been provided with previously unavailable educational opportunities, we are concerned that some current approaches to providing instructional assistant support might be counterproductive. Current research on the use of instructional assistants to support students with disabilities in general education classes is limited to a small number of studies that sought to clarify existing roles and responsibilities (Doyle, 1995), to explore the expanded use of natural supports (Erwin, 1996), and to use activity schedules and decreased prompts to foster greater student autonomy (Hall, McClannahan, & Krantz, 1995).

The purpose of this study was to further extend this recent research by highlighting some of the key issues we observed in general education classrooms where students with disabilities were supported by instructional assistants. The nature of these findings holds important implications for evaluating how we use, train, and supervise instructional assistants so that their work can be supportive of valued educational outcomes for students with disabilities and their peers without disabilities in general education classrooms.

METHOD

Research Sites and Study Participants

Throughout the 1994-95 and 1995-96 school years, data were collected in 16 classrooms in 11 public schools in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Utah, and Vermont where students with multiple disabilities were educated in general education classrooms. The grade levels included preschool (with students without disabilities), kindergarten, and Grades 1, 2, 3, 5, and 11 (Grade 11 was primarily education within integrated community and vocational settings). Primary study participants included students with disabilities and the adults who supported their education in these general education classes.

The seven female and four male students with disabilities all were identified as deaf-blind, though each had some residual hearing and or vision. The students ranged in age from 4 through 20 years. All of these students were reported to have significant cognitive delays and additional disabilities such as orthopedic impairments (n = 10, 91%), health impairments (n = 7, 64%), and behavioral impairments (n = 4, 36%).

A total of 134 educational team members participated in this study, including 123 females (92%) and 11 males (8%). This number does not include the many special area teachers (e.g., physical education, music, art, library), other school personnel or volunteers, and classmates encountered in the course of our observations. Thirty-four of the team members were related services providers (i.e., speech/language pathologists (n = 14), physical therapists (n = 13), nurses (n = 8), occupational therapists (n = 7), itinerant teachers of the blind and visually impaired (n = 4), itinerant teachers of the deaf and hearing impaired (n = 4), deaf-blind specialist (n = 2), orientation and mobility specialist (n = 1), employment specialist (n = 1), and family support consultant (n = 1). The remaining respondents included 20 special educators, 17 instructional assistants, 16 general education teachers, 15 parents (i.e., mothers [n = 11], fathers [n = 4]), and 9 school administrators. In all but one classroom, one or more instructional assistants were assigned to support the student with disabilities. Four of the instructional assistants had completed a bachelor's degree, 12 had graduated from high school, and one had not completed high school.

Data Collection

This qualitative research study relied primarily on extensive classroom observations (n = 110) of the students with disabilities and their teams, averaging 2 to 3 hr each. Observations consisted of typical school day activities such as large and small groups with peers who did not have disabilities, individual and community-based activities, lunch, recess, class transitions, and individual therapy sessions. Field notes were collected using laptop computers by the five-person research team.

Semistructured interviews were conducted with team members in an effort to more fully understand the classroom observations. From May through September 1995, the research team conducted 40 semistructured interviews with a subset of team members from each team, including related services providers (n = 14), special educators (n = 9), parents (n = 8), classroom teachers (n = 4), instructional assistants (n = 3), and administrators (n = 2). Interviews typically lasted between 45 and 75 min; they were audiotaped and later transcribed. Each interviewer asked questions pertaining to (a) how support service decisions were made by the team historically, (b) the interactions among classroom staff providing and receiving support (e.g., classroom teacher, instructional assistant, special educator, related services providers), (c) the roles and responsibilities of the instructional assistants, (d) strengths and weaknesses of the teams' approach to providing classroom support, and (e) potential improvements in the provision of support services.

Data Analysis

The observational and interview data were analyzed by the first author inductively using categorical coding (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). These analyses were reviewed by the other research team members in an attempt to clarify the data presentation and ensure accuracy. The first author ensured his familiarity with the data by (a) participating in data collection (i.e., 31 observations, 17 interviews), (b) reviewing all transcripts of observations and interviews conducted by other research team members, (c) maintaining ongoing contact with research team members, and (d) being involved with research sites over an extended period of time.

First, transcripts of observations and interviews were read and marked by hand using over 150 separate codes consisting of words or phrases descriptive of text content (e.g., scrutiny, fringe, defer); particularly descriptive passages were highlighted and separate notes were maintained on emerging themes. Each observation and interview transcript was imported from a word processing program into HyperQual2 (Padilla, 1992), a text-sorting program designed to assist in qualitative data analysis. Each observation and interview was reread and codes were rearranged and collapsed into 25 categories using HyperQual2 to generate 25 code-specific reports. Inductive analysis (Patton, 1990) was applied to the code-specific reports to assist in the identification of themes. One theme with extensive data pertained to the proximity between the student with disabilities and the instructional assistants. Further analysis of this data highlighted eight distinct subthemes, which are presented in the results.

Triangulation was employed, using a series of techniques that can, "contribute to verification and validation of qualitative analysis" (Patton, 1990, p. 464). Credibility of the finding in this study was supported using methods triangulation to explore the consistency of findings generated by different methods. In this case, extensive observations and interviews allowed for comparison across time at the same sites. Additionally, this allowed for comparison of what was actually observed with what people reported in their interviews. Triangulation of sources was also used to explore the consistency of different data sources using the same method. For example, because teams were studied, it provided a unique opportunity to explore the nature of participant responses to the same issues queried during interviews.

RESULTS

One of the most prominent findings that emerged from the data was that instructional assistants were in close proximity to the students with disabilities on an ongoing basis. This was evidenced by (a) the instructional assistant maintaining physical contact with the student (e.g., shoulder, back, arms, hands) or the student's wheelchair; (b) the instructional assistant sitting in a chair immediately next to the child; (c) the student sitting in the instructional assistant's lap when classmates were seated on the floor; and (d) the instructional assistant accompanying the student with disabilities to virtually every place the student went within the classroom, school building, and grounds.

Although study participants indicated that some level of close proximity between students with disabilities and instructional assistants was desirable and sometimes essential (e.g., tactile signing, instructional interactions, health management), they also recognized that unnecessary and excessive adult proximity was not always necessary and could be detrimental to students. As one mother who had observed her son's classroom stated:

> At calendar time in the morning she (instructional assistant) doesn't have to be right by his side. She could kind of walk away. She doesn't have to be part of his wheelchair. That's what it feels like. I just think that he could break away a little bit (from the instructional assistant) if he were included more into all the activities with the regular classroom teacher.

A speech/language pathologist from the same team independently stated, "I think there is some unnecessary mothering or hovering going on."

Analysis of the data revealed eight subthemes pertaining to proximity between instructional assistants and students with disabilities that are presented in the following sections (see Figure 1).

Interference with Ownership and Responsibility by General Educators

Most of the classroom teachers in this sample did not describe their role as including responsibility for educating the student with disabilities who was placed in their class. Team members reported that the proximity and availability of the instructional assistants created a readily accessible opportunity for professional staff to avoid assuming responsibility and ownership for the education of students with disabilities placed in general education classrooms.

Different expectations regarding the role of the classroom teacher was a point of conflict within many of the teams. As one related services provider stated, "She (the classroom teacher) doesn't take on direct instruction (of the students with disabilities). In fact, . . . she stated at meetings that she doesn't see that as her role. And I disagree with that. I mean she is a teacher."

Although special educators and related services providers were involved in each case, almost universally it was the instructional assistants who were given the responsibility and ownership for educating the students with disabilities. Teachers were observed having limited interactions with the student with disabilities, proportionally less than those with other class members. Involvement by the teachers that did occur most often was limited to greetings, farewells, and occasional praise. Instructional interactions occurred less frequently (e.g., being called on to answer a question in class). A special educator summed up the need for clarification sought by many educational team members when she said, "What should the classroom teacher's role be? Even in our most successful situations we don't have a lot of classroom teachers who are saying, 'I have teaching responsibility for this kid.'" Most teams we observed had not confronted this issue. "We haven't as a team come out and said, 'All right, what is the role of the classroom teacher in teaching this child?'"

Data consistently indicated that it was the instructional assistants, not the professional staff, who were making and implementing virtually all of the day-to-day curricular and instructional decisions. One speech pathologist said, "[W]e (the team) have talked about this many times. We have our most seriously challenging students with instructional assistants." A special educator explained, "The reality is that the instructional assistants are the teachers. Though I'm not comfortable with them having to make as many instructional decisions." An experienced instructional assistant explained, "I never get that kind of information (about instruction related issues and planning). I just wing it!"

The instructional assistants demonstrated unfettered autonomy in their actions throughout the day as evidenced by entering, leaving, and changing teacher-directed whole class activities whenever they chose with no evidence of consulting the teacher. As one instructional assistant said, "We do not do a lot of what the class does. I do what I think he can do." She justified her role as decision maker by saying, "I am the one that works with him all day long." Instructional assistants reported becoming increasingly comfortable with their role as the primary instructor for the student with disabilities, as one stated, "[We are] the only people who really feel comfortable with Holly."

The instructional assistants in this study reported that they received mostly on-the-job training from other instructional assistants by talking with each other and job shadowing so that pat-

FIGURE 1

Problems Related to Instructional Assistant Proximity

Interference with Ownership and Responsibility by General Educators

- "I'm not sure how Holly is going to be involved in this activity, but that's her aide's job." (Physical education teacher)
- "The teachers tend to kind of let the individual (assistants) kind of run the program." (Mother of a student with disabilities)

Separation from Classmates

- An instructional assistant waited until all the other students had lined up at the teacher's direction and had filed out of the classroom before prompting the student with disabilities to leave the room, trailing the group by about 10 yards.
- In the middle of an activity, after James had one turn, the instructional assistant quietly removed him from the group while the class continued their activity.

Dependence on Adults

- During a large group literacy activity, the instructional assistant had positioned herself near the back of the group, a few feet away from Annie (the student with disabilities). Annie looked away from the teacher and toward her instructional assistant every few seconds as the instructional assistant offered her signed instructions (e.g., look at the teacher, sit down). After a couple of minutes, Annie walked back to the instructional assistant and sat on her lap.

Impact on Peer Interactions

- "A shadow is not necessarily good. It's more of a stigma. I really hadn't considered the fact that Mrs. Kinney (the instructional assistant) is always very close to Jaime, although there are times when she is out on a break or whatever and he is in very capable hands with his peers. I think it would be better to have her integrated more in the classroom and maybe not feel that she needs to hover so much. (Classroom teacher)
- "It (close proximity of instructional assistants) may be kind of intimidating to them (peers). It may sort of be a barrier to them interacting with him." (Speech/language pathologist)

Limitations on Receiving Competent Instruction

- In attempting to use discrimination learning to teach the differences between named objects, pictures, symbols, or colors, lessons yielded little because the instructional assistants demonstrated limited knowledge or application of basic instructional design issues such as position bias, use of negative exemplars/distracters, and establishing mastery criteria prior to introducing new items.

Loss of Personal Control

- Did Holly really want to eat lunch apart from her classmates in a separate room? Did Helen really want to play the math game with an adult rather than a classmate like all the other students were doing?

Loss of Gender Identity

- Loss of gender identity was most commonly observed in reference to bathroom use when a male student was taken into a women's bathroom by a female instructional assistant.

Interference with Instruction of Other Students

- An occupational therapist reported that the students without disabilities were more distracted by the instructional assistant doing different activities than by the "noises" of the student with disabilities.

terns of interaction by instructional assistants were passed on. Inservice training that a small number received typically was conducted in groups that included only other instructional assistants. Ironically, experienced professionals who said things like, "We do not have the training to work with these high needs kids" turned over the education of their most challenging students to instructional assistants, many of whom were high school educated, had no previous classroom experience, and had minimal training. As one special educator acknowledged, from a logical perspective, "It doesn't make sense."

In one site where an instructional assistant was not present, the classroom teacher, with support from special educators and related services providers, successfully assumed the primary role for instructing the student with disabilities. She directed his instructional program, spent time teaching him within groups and individually, used sign language to communicate with him, and included him in all class activities. This teacher stated, "You know the teacher needs to be the one who makes the decisions a lot because she is working with Mark (student with disabilities) and she knows Mark and knows which areas he needs help in." A special educator in this site acknowledged that not every aspect of this student's individualized education program (IEP) requires significant support and that some aspects of the IEP, "left to the regular educator would be just fine." The specialist for the deaf-blind on this team said, "I think a lot of it (the teacher's success with the students with disabilities) is that she has high expectations for Mark. She does not do for him; instead she shows him how to do things. She considers him very much part of the class."

Separation from Classmates

Instructional assistants were regularly observed separating the student with disabilities from the class group. For example, when it was time to go to a special area class (e.g., art, music, physical education) one instructional assistant consistently left class a couple minutes before the rest of the class to wheel the student with disabilities to the specialty classroom.

Even when the students were basically stationary, such as seated on a rug to hear a story, the instructional assistant often physically separated the student with disabilities from the group by positioning him on the fringe of the group (e.g., the farthest away from the teacher). Instructional assistants reported that their positioning of the student allowed them to leave the activity whenever they chose.

Sometimes separation from the class occurred during circumstances where the match between class activity and the student's individual needs appeared highly compatible. For example, Annie entered the classroom during an individual writing time. As the instructional assistant began an adapted writing activity using large chart paper and markers, a second instructional assistant approached her and said, "She can do this writing just as easily in the other room as here." With that prompt, the instructional assistants separated Annie from the class without consultation with, or resistance from, the classroom teacher.

Dependence on Adults

Instructional assistants in close proximity to students with disabilities were observed prompting most every behavior exhibited by the students in this study (e.g., using writing implements, using gestures, following instructions, using materials). There was little evidence of fading prompts to decrease dependence and encourage students to respond to other people (e.g., school staff, peers) and more naturally occurring cues (e.g., the presence of certain toys or school supplies). Alternatively, an instructional assistant who was cognizant of Helen's dependence on her, encouraged her to do things for herself through redirection, especially when the student sought unneeded assistance with tasks such as dressing and grooming.

An example of dependence on adults was observed on the school playground during recess. The student with disabilities was being shadowed on a large wooden play structure by an instructional assistant. The student was capably crossing a wooden bridge where safety was not a concern. The student charged toward the bridge, letting go of her assistant's hand. A few steps onto the bridge she stopped abruptly and quietly turned back toward the instructional assistant who was only a foot behind her. The instructional assistant smiled, saying, "You know me. I stick right with you." The student reached back and took the instructional assistant's hand instead of crossing the short span of the playground bridge on her own. Sometimes the school system's dependence on instructional assistants was so strong that when the instructional assistants were absent, the family was asked to keep the child home from school or the mother was asked to be the substitute instructional assistant.

Impact on Peer Interactions

Data indicated that close proximity of instructional assistants had an impact on interactions between students with disabilities and their classroom peers. As one special educator shared:

> Sometimes I think it inhibits her relationship with her peers because a lot is done for Holly and Holly doesn't have the opportunity to interact with her peers because there is always somebody hovering over her, showing her what to do or doing things for her. I'd like to get the instructional assistant away from Holly a little bit more so that peers will have a chance to get in there and work more with Holly.

A classroom teacher offered her perspectives on how instructional assistants might be used differently.

> I would definitely prefer having a paraprofessional assigned to the classroom and then just as necessary to have her work with a child (with special educational needs) when there is a specific activity, but not exclusively to work with just that child. I think it is important for two reasons. One is that you don't want to give the child any extra stigma that is associated with a special education label. Second is that it is more healthy for the paraprofessional to work with other children so that he or she doesn't get burned out with working with just one child all the time.

Interference with peer interactions did not occur in all cases. Some team members said that if the instructional assistant was well liked by the other children it had a positive impact on the student with disabilities' access to peers. As a physical therapist described, "I have also seen it (proximity of instructional assistants) be very, very positive, in that the instructional assistant is really well liked and has done a lot to establish wonderful friendships for the student."

Conversely, if the instructional assistant was not well liked it had a corresponding negative impact. Sometimes the close proximity students had with instructional assistants led peers to perceive them as a package deal. As one mother cautiously shared, "I don't know if I should say this or not, but a lot of it was that kids didn't like the aide, so they would stay away from Annie for that reason."

When teachers assigned students to student-directed pairs or small groups, instructional assistants were often observed dominating the group's interactions. In some cases, the involvement of the instructional assistant was so omnipresent that children without disabilities simply left the group with the instructional assistant and joined a different group with only classmates, no adults. In other cases when students without disabilities initiated interactions, they were rebuffed by the instructional assistant. Ronny (a student without disabilities) asked the instructional assistant, "Do you want me to help Jamie?" She answered, "No, not yet." Ronny was never asked back to assist his classmate. At other times instructional assistants interrupted initiations made by peers. For example, in a physical education class, Michael went over to Jaime and began to run with him in his wheelchair to participate in the activity. The instructional assistant interrupted this interaction saying to Michael, "If you want to run, I'll push Jaime." After a hesitant pause, Michael reluctantly gave way to the instructional assistant. At times, prolonged close adult proximity adversely affected peer involvement even when the instructional assistant was not present. As one special educator shared:

> We've tried (reducing adult proximity) . . . like in the lunchroom. Like putting Maria or any of the other students (with disabilities) in the lunchroom and then backing off a little bit. But I think that it (close adult proximity) has been done for so long, that the peers have stayed away for so long, that they are just kind of hesitant to jump right in and do anything.

When the instructional assistant was not in close proximity to the student with disabilities, peers were more likely to fill the space the instructional assistant had vacated. The following example is typical of what we observed.

As the instructional assistant leaves momentarily to get some materials, Mallory (student without disabilities) walks over to Elena (student with disabilities). She puts her hand gently on her shoulder and calmly says "easy hands" in response to Elena being a bit rough with her book. Elena turns to look at Mallory and then makes some vocalizations and moves her hands as Mallory talks to her about her book. As the instructional assistant starts to return, Mallory stops talking with Elena and returns to her seat.

Limitations on Receiving Competent Instruction

Observations and interviews indicated that students in this study participated in classroom activities that typically were not planned by trained professional staff. While several team members praised the work of instructional assistants in their "caregiving duties" (e.g., feeding, dressing), they expressed concerns about their role as assistants of instruction.

Many classroom teachers expected capabilities and performance from instructional assistants that were potentially unrealistic. As one teacher explained, "My problem is that I will be teaching a class and my expectations are that the paraprofessional will get the gist of what I am doing and glean some kernel out of it that can be used right then on the spot." Making such on-the-spot decisions requires a depth of instructional knowledge and skill that many paraprofessionals and professionals do not possess.

When instructional assistants are assigned to a task, many of them say they feel compelled to go through the motions of an activity even when it seems apparent to them that their efforts are not being effective. As one instructional assistant explained, "Sometimes it gets discouraging because he is asleep, but I try. I just feel like I'm baby-sitting. I don't feel like I'm doing what I am supposed to be doing." This instructional assistant was observed repeatedly continuing to speak to the student and presenting activity-related objects, even though it was obvious that the student was asleep. In other cases, instructional assistants would both ask and answer questions posed to students with disabilities. "Would you like to paint the turkey?" (after a 1 sec pause with no observable response) "You would!", then the activity would begin.

Loss of Personal Control

When students have significant communication, motor, and/or sensory difficulties, it can be a challenge for students to advocate for themselves, express their preferences, or at times to reject the decisions of the adults who control most aspects of their personal daily functions at school (e.g., eating, toileting, mobility, selection of leisure activities, choice of friends with whom to spend time). A vision specialist put it succinctly when she pointed out the limited opportunities for choices provided to students with disabilities who "can't verbalize and say 'stop talking to me like that' or can't run away." Instructional assistants frequently made such choices for the student under their supervision. In cases where student communication is unclear, we are left to wonder if the decisions are those the student would make. As one parent wondered, "I think it would be intimidating for me if I was a kid. Just being watched over all the time."

The following examples from our observations, presented as questions, highlight the kinds of decisions made every day that represent a loss of personal control by the students:

- Did Mary really want her cheeseburger dipped in applesauce before she ate each bite?
- Did James really need to be excused from the fun activities in the gymnasium early to have his diapers changed?
- Did James really want to stay inside during recess because it was too cold outside?

Loss of Gender Identity by Students with Disabilities

In cases where the instructional assistant and the student were the opposite gender we observed some interactions that suggested the gender of the student with disabilities was secondary to the gender of the instructional assistant. For example, the gender of the instructional assistant superseded that of the student with disabilities in a physical education class. The teacher divided the class into two groups for warm-up activities. The girls were directed to take five laps around the gym and the boys were directed to do jumping-jacks. As the physical education teacher said, "OK. Let's go!", the female instructional assistant grabbed James' wheelchair and began running around the gym with him along with all the other girls. When the activity was switched, she assisted him in moving his arms to partially participate in jumping-jacks, again with the girls.

Interference with Instruction of Other Students

Students without disabilities did not seem to be distracted much by idiosyncratic behaviors of their classmate with disabilities (e.g., coughing, vocalizations, stereotyped body movements) or common classroom sounds and movements (e.g., small group discussions, questions being asked of the teacher, talk among classmates, computers, pencil sharpener being used, doors and drawers being opened and closed). However, in some cases instructional assistant behaviors were observed to cause distraction during large group lessons taught by the teacher. During these times, if the instructional assistant began doing a different activity with the student with disabilities in the midst of the teacher's large group activity (e.g., reading a story, playing a game, using manipulative materials), those students without disabilities closest to the instructional assistant turned their attention away from the teacher and toward the instructional assistant.

DISCUSSION

Although many team members acknowledged that instructional assistants can and do play an important role in educating children with disabilities, our interviews and observations identified a series of concerns regarding their proximity to the students they are assigned to support. These data are limited to the cases that were studied, and any generalization to other situations should be approached cautiously, especially considering the modest number of sites, the limited geographic distribution of sites, and their homogeneity in terms of serving students with multiple disabilities in general education classrooms.

It is hoped that results from this study can be used to address related issues and practices in other situations where students with disabilities are supported using instructional assistants. Too often students with disabilities are placed in general education classrooms without clear expectations established among the team members regarding which professional staff will plan, implement, monitor, evaluate, and adjust instruction. This absence of clarity helps create an environment in which the instructional assistant directs a student's educational program and maintains excessive proximity with the student. We believe this occurs not because instructional assistants seize control, but rather because instructional assistants are the people in the most subordinate position in the school hierarchy. When supervisory personnel (e.g., classroom teachers, special educators) engaged in limited planning and implemention of instruction for the student with disabilities, the responsibility fell to the assistants. These observations highlight that some decisions about the use of instructional assistants are not necessarily rational, but rather may be driven by teachers' (a) fear of difference or change, (b) adherence to customary routines, (c) a reluctance to add another substantial task to what many perceive as an already extensive set of responsibilities, or (d) lack of knowledge and/or support for teaching the student with disabilities. Instructional assistants can play a valuable educational role in assisting the teaching faculty, but generally we believe it is inappropriate and inadvisable to have instructional assistants serve in the capacity of "teacher."

Although awareness of the effects of proximity is an important first step in addressing its potential hazards, teachers and instructional assistants may need specific training in basic instructional methods designed to fade assistance and encourage students to respond to natural cues (e.g., chaining, time delay procedures, errorless learning, fading, cue redundancy, task analyses, correction procedures that use naturally occurring cues as prompts for the next steps; Alberto & Troutman, 1995; Snell, 1992). Otherwise adults may inadvertently be strengthening the student's cue and prompt dependence. To some extent, many students are initially dependent on cues and supports from the adults who teach them. This starting point needs to change so that adults are increasingly aware of fading their supports to allow students greater autonomy. While capable learners can often overcome less than stellar teaching approaches, those students with more significant learning difficulties often require more precise planning and instruction in our efforts to help them learn. We believe that this problem is not an issue of placement location, since these same problems can exist in special education classes. Therefore, the concern over increasing instructional integrity is appropriately an important issue that can and should be addressed within the context of general education classrooms. We suggest that the classroom involvement of instructional assistants must be compatible within the context of the broader plan for the classroom that is developed and implemented by the classroom team for the benefit of all the students.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The findings of this study demonstrate that there are a number of areas of concern regarding the roles of instructional assistants who support the education of students with disabilities in general education settings. The following is a list of considerations for future policy development, school-based practices, training, and research.

- School districts need to rethink their policies on hiring instructional assistants for individual students. We suggest that alternatives be explored that include hiring assistants for the classroom rather than an individual student. This would allow general and special education teachers to distribute instructional assistants' time and job responsibilities more equitably to benefit a variety of students, both with and without disabilities.
- School staff and families need to reach agreement on when students need the close proximity of an adult, when that proximity can be appropriately provided through natural supports such as classmates, and when to appropriately withdraw supports that require close proximity.
- School staff and community members (e.g., classroom teachers, special educators, parents) need awareness training on the effects and potential harm to children caused by excessive adult proximity, such as described in this study (e.g., loss of personal control, loss of gender identity, interference with peer interactions, dependence on adults).
- School teams need to explicitly clarify the role of the classroom teacher as the instructional leader in the classroom including their roles and responsibilities as the teacher for their students with disabilities. It is the classroom teacher's role to direct the activities of the classroom, including the activities of instructional assistants in their charge.
- School staff (e.g., classroom teachers, instructional assistants) should be afforded training in basic instructional procedures that facilitate learning by students with special educational needs in the context of typical classroom activities. Additionally, training should specifically include approaches related to decreasing dependence and fading prompts often associated with excessive and prolonged proximity of adults.
- Students with disabilities need to be physically, programmatically, and interactionally included in classroom activities that have been planned by a qualified teacher in conjunction with support staff as needed (e.g., special educators, related services providers). Such changes in practice should decrease problems associated with students with disabilities being isolated within the classroom.
- Instructional assistants should be provided with competency-based training that includes ongoing, classroom-based supervision by the teacher.
- Instructional assistants should have opportunities for input into instructional planning based on their knowledge of the student, but the ultimate accountability for planning, implementing, monitoring, and adjusting instruction should rest with the professional staff, just as it does for all other students without disabilities.
- Use of instructional assistants in general education classrooms must increasingly be done in ways that consider the unique educational needs of all students in the class, rather than just those with disabilities.
- Research on the aforementioned items should be ongoing in order to explore efficacious ways of supporting students in our schools.

This study suggests that assigning an instructional assistant to a student with special educational needs in a general education class, though intended to be helpful, may sometimes result in problems associated with excessive, prolonged adult proximity. In questioning the current use of instructional assistants, we are not suggesting that instructional assistants not be used or that the field revert to historically ineffective ways of educating students with disabilities (e.g., special education classes, special education schools). We are suggesting that our future policy development, training, and research focus on different configurations of service delivery that provide needed supports in general education classrooms, yet avoid the inherent problems associated with our current practices. Undoubtedly, these service provision variations will necessarily need to be individualized and flexible to account for the diverse variations in students, teachers, schools, and communities across our country. We hope that by raising the issues presented in this study, we can extend the national discussion on practices to support students with varying characteristics in general education classrooms and take corresponding actions that will be educationally credible, financially responsible—helping, not hovering!

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Unit 2

Activity Sheets and To Do Lists

Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities of Paraeducators and Other Team Members

Participant Activity "To Do" List

Activity: Paraeducator Roles

1. Form a group of three or four members.
2. Assign appropriate roles (e.g., facilitator, recorder, reporter).
3. Using the activity sheet **Paraeducator Roles** (2 pages), each participant should complete the portion of the form labeled "To be completed individually." (6 minutes)
4. Next, the small group briefly shares what individuals have written and completes the second half of the **Paraeducator Roles** activity sheet, labeled "To be discussed in small groups." (10 minutes)
5. Be prepared to share your ideas and questions with the large group.
6. The instructor will facilitate a large-group discussion based on your small-group work. (12 minutes)

Paraeducator Roles

To be completed individually		To be discussed in small groups	
List Examples by Role Category	(a) Approximate % of time per week paraeducator spends on this role category (b) What would be an ideal % of time?	What types of initial or ongoing training or support have been provided to the paraeducator?	What types of training or support are needed in order for the paraeducator to appropriately engage in this role?
Implementing Teacher-Planned Instruction:			
Supervision of Students:			
Clerical & General Duties:			

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Paraeducator Roles (continued)

To be completed individually			To be discussed in small groups	
List Examples by Role Category	(a) Approximate % of time per week paraeducator spends on this role category	(b) What would be an ideal % of time?	What types of initial or ongoing training or support have been provided to the paraeducator?	What types of training or support are needed in order for the paraeducator to appropriately engage in this role?
Behavioral and Social Support:				
Supporting Individual Students:				
Other (specify):				

Participant Activity "To Do" List

Activity: Paraeducator Role Controversies

1. Form a group of three or four members.
2. Assign appropriate roles (e.g., facilitator, recorder, reporter).
3. Using the **Paraeducator Role Controversies** activity sheet (2 pages), each participant should complete the portion of the form labeled "To be completed individually." (5 minutes)
4. Next, the small group briefly shares what individuals have written and completes the second half of the activity sheet, labeled "To be discussed in small groups." (14 minutes)
5. Be prepared to share your ideas and questions with the large group.
6. The instructor will facilitate a large-group discussion based on your small-group work. (14 minutes)

Paraeducator Role Controversies

To be completed individually		To be discussed in small groups	
Areas of Role Controversy: To what extent do paraeducators engage in these roles? Why or why not?	Are paraeducators qualified for these roles? Who should be performing these roles?	What factors contribute to paraeducators engaging in roles that should be performed by qualified professionals?	What would need to change so that appropriate distinctions are made between the roles of professionals and the roles of paraeducators?
Assessment:			
Instructional Planning:			
Adapting Curriculum:			

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Paraeducator Role Controversies (continued)

To be completed individually		To be discussed in small groups	
Areas of Role Controversy: To what extent do paraeducators engage in these roles? Why or why not?	Are paraeducators qualified for these roles? Who should be performing these roles?	What factors contribute to paraeducators engaging in roles that should be performed by qualified professionals?	What would need to change so that appropriate distinctions are made between the roles of professionals and the roles of paraeducators?
Designing Accommodations:			
Communicating with Families:			
Other:			

Participant Activity "To Do" List

Activity: Helping or Hovering? Classroom Assessment

1. Form a group of three or four members.

2. Assign appropriate roles (e.g., facilitator, recorder, reporter).

3. Using the activity sheet **Helping or Hovering? Classroom Assessment** (3 pages), each participant should answer "Yes" or "No" to the 22 questions by circling his or her choices. (8 minutes)

4. Next, each small group discusses the individual responses with an emphasis on the extent to which the listed items occur in group members' situations. The groups should then consider what the self-assessment means to them and what might be done differently. (10 minutes)

5. Be prepared to share your ideas and questions with the large group.

6. The instructor will facilitate a large-group discussion based on your small-group work. (10 minutes)

Helping or Hovering? Classroom Assessment

Directions: Answer each of the following questions based on your experiences in general education classrooms where students with disabilities are supported by paraeducators. Circle either "Yes" or "No" for each question.. Answer "Yes" if that is the case just part of the time. If you are a general education classroom teacher, you will be answering based on your own experience. If you are a special educator or related service provider, answer based on your experiences in general education classrooms.

1. Is the paraeducator usually positioned in close proximity (e.g., within arm's reach) to the student with disabilities? YES NO

2. Is being in close proximity to the students with disabilities an expected part of the paraeducator's role? YES NO

3. On a per pupil basis, does the classroom teacher spend less time with students who have disabilities than with those who don't have disabilities? YES NO

4. Do any of the professional staff think of the paraeducator as the "primary teacher" of the student with disabilities? YES NO

5. Does the classroom teacher feel uncomfortable working with the student who has disabilities? YES NO

6. Does the classroom teacher have insufficient knowledge about what the student with disabilities should be learning or how that student should be taught? YES NO

7. Does the paraeducator decide when the student with disabilities enters or leaves class activities? YES NO

8. Does the paraeducator decide whether a student with disabilities will be included in classroom activities designed by the teacher? YES NO

(Continued next page)

Helping or Hovering? (continued)

9. Does the paraeducator plan lessons or activities for the student with disabilities? YES NO

10. Does the paraeducator design adaptations or accommodations required for the student with disabilities? YES NO

11. Does the paraeducator know more about the student with disabilities than the classroom teacher or special educator? YES NO

12. Does the paraeducator communicate more frequently with the parents of the student with disabilities than the teacher or special educator does? YES NO

13. Does the paraeducator have a better working relationship with the parents of the student with disabilities than the teacher or special educator does? YES NO

14. Is the work space (e.g., desk) of the student with disabilities who is supported by a paraeducator situated at the back or side of the classroom? YES NO

15. Does the paraeducator closely accompany the student with disabilities to places or activities where most students would typically have large-group supervision (e.g., lunch, recess, hallways)? YES NO

16. Have you ever observed situations that caused you to think that a student with disabilities was overly dependent on a paraeducator? YES NO

17. Is it unusually difficult for the student with disabilities or the professional staff on days when the paraeducator is absent? YES NO

(Continued next page)

Helping or Hovering? (continued)

18. Have you ever observed situations that caused you to think that the involvement of the paraeducator was interfering with social relationships between a student with disabilities and peers or classmates without disabilities? YES NO

19. Have you ever felt that the instruction being provided by a paraeducator to a student with disabilities was not high enough quality due to insufficient skill or knowledge? YES NO

20. Have you ever felt that a student with disabilities was afforded less personal control during the school day than is typically afforded to other students of the same age because of control exerted by a paraeducator? YES NO

21. Have you ever observed a paraeducator treat a student with disabilities in a manner that was inconsistent with the gender of the student (e.g., taking a male student into a female-only bathroom)? YES NO

22. Have you ever observed the individual activities or lessons being conducted by a paraeducator for a student with disabilities to distract or interfere with the instruction of other students? YES NO

What's Next?

If you answered "Yes" to any of these questions, it might be a sign that excessive proximity between paraeducators and students with disabilities is a problem in the classroom (although sometimes proximity is necessary and desirable). The more "Yes" responses, the greater the likelihood of problems. Discuss your individual responses with your team or group members and consider what might be done differently.

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Participant Activity "To Do" List

Activity: Professional Roles

1. Form a group of three or four members.
2. Assign appropriate roles (e.g., facilitator, recorder, reporter).
3. To guide your discussion, respond as a group to the questions presented on the activity sheet **Professional Roles: Team Members Directing the Work of Paraeducators** (2 pages). (18 minutes)
4. Be prepared to share your ideas and questions with the large group.
5. The instructor will facilitate a large-group discussion based on your small-group work. (10 minutes)

Professional Roles:
Team Members Directing the Work of Paraeducators

1. Who are the professional team members (e.g., classroom teacher, special area teachers, special educators, related services providers) who work with the paraeducator? What aspect of the student's education should they direct?

Professional Discipline	Aspect of the Program Directed

2. Is there a primary professional who directs the work of the paraeducator in the classroom? Who is it? Does this make the most sense?

3. How is information shared between various professionals and the paraeducator (e.g., by demonstrated, written plans; by video examples; in regularly scheduled meetings; on the fly)?

4. How is information that is shared between various professionals and the paraeducator shared among other team members?

5. What do you think about the way professionals in your situation currently direct the work of paraeducators?

6. What would you like to be done differently in terms of professionals directing the work of paraeducators?

7. What will you commit to doing to improve the situation?

Unit 3

Planning for Paraeducators

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Participant's Overview

Unit 3: Planning for Paraeducators

Brief Description of Unit

The purpose of this unit is to provide information and strategies about planning the work of paraeducators who support the education of students with disabilities in general education. This includes scheduling for paraeducators, planning instructional activities for them to implement, and planning for non-instructional tasks (e.g., large-group supervision, clerical tasks).

Hours of Instruction (in class format)

3 hours

Unit Objectives

Key: K = Knowledge, S = Skill (Knowledge objectives are addressed through readings and class activities; skill objectives are addressed through practicum activities.}

1. Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will know strategies for scheduling and effectively using the time of paraeducators. (K)
2. Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will identify necessary components of instructional and non-instructional plans designed for implementation by a paraeducator. (K)
3. Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will know a variety of strategies for training paraeducators to implement instructional and non-instructional plans developed by educators and related services providers. (K)
4. Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will demonstrate skills in scheduling for paraeducators as well as developing instructional and non-instructional plans to be implemented by paraeducators and ways of training them in using those plans. (S)

Preparing for the Unit

Required Readings:

Backus, L., & CichoskiKelly, E. (2000). *Paraeducators implementing teacher-planned instruction*. Unpublished manuscript, Burlington, VT: University of Vermont, Center on Disability and Community Inclusion.

Doyle, M.B. (1997). The paraprofessional in the inclusive classroom: Supporting individual students. In M.B. Doyle, *The paraprofessional's guide to the inclusive classroom: Working as a team* (pp. 27-37). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Instructor materials:

- overhead projector & screen
- overhead masters (must be copied onto transparencies)
- flip charts & markers
- masking tape
- nametags

Participant Preparation for Unit 3:

- Read the required readings **prior to class**.
- Based on the required readings, write two questions that are relevant to you or your situation for discussion in class.
- Bring writing materials for note-taking to class.
- Bring your Participant Manual to class.
- Review the practicum requirements for Unit 3.

Practicum Requirements

You are encouraged to complete the unit's practicum activities each week, between class meetings if possible. Participants must complete at least two of the practicum requirements for Unit 3. An accompanying practicum checklist of the activities can found in the *Forms* section of this manual. In the event that a practicum requirement is not appropriate for your specific professional situation, alternate activities may be substituted based on negotiation with the instructor. The completed practicum checklist must be submitted to the instructor along with corresponding evidence of completed practicum activities.

Evaluation of Participant Learning

Participants are evaluated in three ways: (1) the *Self-Assessment Review* (to be completed after the last class session), (2) attendance and participation in class activities, and (3) completion of practicum requirements.

Suggested Supplemental Resources

Books and Articles

Alberto, P.A., & Troutman, A.C. (1995). *Applied behavior analysis for teachers (4th ed.).* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Doyle, M.B. (1997). *The paraprofessional's guide to the inclusive classroom: Working as a team.* Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes. (2nd edition due out in 2002).

Pickett, A.L., & Gerlach, K.L. (1997). *Supervising paraeducators in school settings: A team approach.* Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

Web Sites

National Clearinghouse for Paraeducator Resources
http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/CMMR/Clearinghouse.html

National Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services
http://web.gc.cuny.edu/dept/case/nrcp/

Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium
http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/para/

Unit 3 Required Readings

Planning for Paraeducators

Unit 3 includes two brief readings to be read in preparation for the third class session. The Backus and CichoskiKelly (2000) article was written specifically for an *entry-level* course designed for paraeducators. It is included in this *Teacher Leadership* mini-course as well because it provides a succinct summary of information pertaining to teacher-planned instruction. This creates a common information base and opportunities for discussion and planning. The second reading is a short excerpt from Doyle (1997) on supporting individual students with disabilities. It provides practical information about how paraeducators might use information from the IEP (Individual Education Program) under the direction of the classroom teacher and special educator.

Paraeducators Implementing Teacher-Planned Instruction

Linda Backus and Eileen CichoskiKelly

Center on Disability and Community Inclusion
The University Affiliated Program of Vermont, Burlington, VT
April, 2000

Important Information and skills needed for Instruction

Paraeducators should know the components of the educational program for the students with whom they work, including: a) the annual goals and objectives from a student's IEP (individualized education program); b) the extent of the student's participation in the general education curriculum, and c) the "supports" to be provided for the student. In addition, knowing the parts of a lesson plan will allow you to implement instruction effectively. Last, this section provides information about strategies for implementing instruction. Some paraeducators will work with students are not eligible for special education; all of the following components are still important (except for information from the IEP).

What a child is to be taught (the curriculum) and how a child is to be taught (instruction) are determined according to: the general education curriculum (the content and skills taught to students without disabilities, determined by the school's curriculum standards) and the specific, individually determined skills needed by the student. These skills are determined by the student's educational planning team and written as annual goals and objectives in the IEP. In part, the IEP includes the specific annual goals for the student, the objectives for meeting those goals, and the supports the student needs in order to achieve his or her goals or access education.

Decisions about what content or skills to teach a student, what is individually important to him or her, what instructional strategies to use, and what supports might be necessary for the student to succeed are made as part of the IEP process for students with disabilities. These decisions are made by each student's team and are based on a number of factors, including the student's strengths and needs, the student's assessment, an understanding of effective instructional practices, state standards, and the expectations of the general education curriculum.

Prior to engaging in instruction paraeducators should know the extent to which a student participates in the general education curriculum. There are many options for how a student can participate within the general education curriculum. These include: 1) participating in a manner that is the same as other students, 2) multi-level curriculum, 3) curriculum overlapping.

General "supports" are those that are provided to or for a student so that he or she may have access to education. They are sometimes referred to as accommodations or management needs. General supports may be provided by teachers, related services staff, and/or paraeducators to meet student needs in at least five categories, such as personal needs (e.g., feeding, dressing); physical needs (e.g., therapeutic positioning, environmental modifications); teaching others about a student (e.g., a special communication system or emergency procedures); sensory needs (e.g., braille, hearing aid); and access and opportunities (e.g., providing literacy materials, mobility training, vocational experiences).

Your role as a paraeducator is to assist the educators in implementing instruction that reflects the priority learning outcomes articulated in the student's IEP, and within the general education curriculum. If you are unsure about the student's goals or your instructional responsibilities, you should speak with your direct supervisor.

Components of effective lesson plans

As a paraeducator, you should be implementing instruction designed by qualified professionals. Instructional plans, or lesson plans, provide a framework to guide instruction. They will give you crucial information that you will need to teach your students. Although they vary in format, lesson plans generally include a number of components, including: the specific objectives or purpose of the lesson; a description of the materials to be used (e.g., textbooks and pages, supplies, computer programs, equipment); information on how to instruct (e.g., via demonstration, practice, activities); suggestions for grouping students; suggestions for how to respond to correct and incorrect answers; and information about how to evaluate student progress (e.g., via quiz, test, performance).

Effective instructional strategies:

Although a student's goals, objectives, and supports have been determined by the student's educational team and the special or general educator has developed a lesson plan, the components of actual instruction are important to know. The following are some suggestions for ways to teach new skills.

- Good teaching methods benefit all students, including students with and without disabilities. Common methods include: modeling, demonstrating, holding class discussions, practicing, using guided discovery, conducting experiments, taking field trips, using multi-media technology, employing questions, handling manipulative materials, using games, and giving corrective feedback.
- Make sure the learning environment contributes to maximizing student attention on the learning task(s) at hand. You can do this by minimizing distractions, maintaining eye contact, periodically checking (or asking questions) to find out if the material is being understood. If the student is not paying attention, try another way or check with your supervisor about other ideas.

- When presenting new information, always provide some information regarding why the information is important and what the student will be expected to do. It is also helpful to explain or show what a completed product or skill should look like. These are called advanced organizers. Using them helps people retain new skills.
- Always know why you're teaching the material and try to relate it to previously learned information or significant information in the student's life. When you are finished with a lesson, always briefly review what was learned. This aids in remembering the steps and the skills learned.
- Paraeducators can use various ways to demonstrate skills and tasks that reflect the student's learning style. This is known as modeling. Demonstrations should be clear, simple, and broken down into sequential steps. After the demonstration or modeling, the student should be given a chance to model the step and should be given feedback before going on to the next step. Combining visual cues or verbal directions can enhance the instruction. Allowing the student time to practice the skill, once acquired, especially in more than one setting, will help him or her retain the new skill or knowledge.
- It is important to give students feedback on how they are doing. The best kind of feedback is immediate, points out the positive, is specific, and points out a way to improve. The more specific, the better. For instance, instead of saying, "Good job, Sally," try stating exactly what Sally did that was good: "Sally, you learned that new strategy for long division so well that you can now move on to two digits!"
- When a student makes an error, it is good practice to point it out in a nonjudgmental way and give the student more information or help until the lesson is learned. Try not to complete the task for the student. Whenever a student makes a mistake, there are a number of responses that you may use to help the student succeed at the task:
    - indicating "Try again"
    - expanding on the information provided
    - simplifying the problem
    - asking leading questions
    - modeling the correct response
    - modeling then doing
    - simplifying the model
    - providing physical assistance (the least amount necessary)

More specialized instruction:

If students are not progressing adequately with the teaching methods listed above, more precise methods may be helpful (Giangreco & Cravedi-Cheng, 1998). The methods selected by the teacher should take into consideration the goals, the student's learning style and characteristics, and the most status-enhancing (and least disruptive) to teach any skill.

Reference

Giangreco, M.F., & Cravedi-Cheng, L. (1998). Instructional strategies. In M.F. Giangreco (Ed.), *Quick-guides to inclusion 2: Ideas for educating students with disabilities.* (pp. 29-55). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Source: M. B. Doyle (1997). *The Paraprofessional's Guide to the Inclusive Classroom: Working as a Team*, (pp. 27-37). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.
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CHAPTER 3

The Paraprofessional in the Inclusive Classroom

Supporting Individual Students

Objectives

- Learn ways to get to know students with disabilities.
- Learn about individualized education programs (IEPs)
- Understand how to use an IEP
- Understand the importance of student schedules

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Your education team will learn many things throughout the school year about every student in the classrooms in which its members work. Given the nature of the paraprofessional's job, there are specific students with disabilities with whom paraprofessionals will work more closely than others, and, therefore, paraprofessionals will learn more about these students. As a way for paraprofessionals to become more familiar with some of the interests, unique strengths, abilities, and needs of these individual students, three types of information worksheets are included in this chapter:

1. Student Profile
2. Individualized Education Program (IEP) Matrix
3. Student Learning Priorities and Support

As a team, obtain or generate the necessary information required to complete the worksheets for each informational area. This information will support each team member in his or her daily teaching and learning. A brief description of each worksheet and how it can be used is provided below.

✎ Who Is the Student?

The "Student Profile" worksheet on pages 33–35 outlines background information related to individual students with disabilities. Included in this form are questions related to some of the student's strengths, abilities, and interests. Becoming familiar with this background information will allow the paraprofessional to save valuable time in getting to know the student with disabilities. Someone who has worked with the student previously (e.g., special educator, general educator) should complete this form. After the form has been completed, the current education team should review and discuss the student's profile and how this information might affect decisions related to future classroom management and instruction. As the school year progresses, each member of your education team undoubtedly will discover additional characteristics about each student with disabilities and may want to update the student's profile accordingly. Many teams have found this type of information helpful at the end of the school year when assisting students with and without disabilities to make the transition to the next grade.

A Paraprofessional's Reflection

One of my major job responsibilities as a paraprofessional is providing instructional assistance to a fourth grader with severe disabilities. I was hired because this young girl was a member of a general education class. Initially, providing assistance in the general education classroom was challenging because the general educator, the special educator, and I had not discussed our individual perceptions regarding one another's roles and responsibilities. Actually, I didn't feel comfortable in the general classroom at first because I was doing most of the "teaching" of this young girl. Because I had no formal training in how to teach, my instructing this student didn't seem right. The student and I became very isolated in the general education classroom. Sure, we were in the same room, but we were really not part of the general activities. The student and I did our own thing; we did whatever "I" wanted.

Then one day I said to the general educator, "This doesn't seem right. I wasn't trained to develop lesson plans for students with disabilities, nor was I trained to make such significant instructional decisions. Actually, I don't have any formal training in how to teach at all!" I also told the teacher that I felt completely alone—like an island in the fourth-grade classroom. That was the beginning of a terrific change in my job responsibilities! The general educator and I met with the special educator, and *together* we developed a shared set of expectations. The general and special educators took on the responsibilities for developing the lesson plans, and they started to provide the training that I needed right in the classroom. In the end, I learned the importance of clear, direct, and honest communication.

✎ What Is an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?

Every student receiving special education services has an individualized education program (IEP).The IEP contains documentation of the student's learning priorities for the current school year. These learning priorities are stated as annual goals and short-term objectives. The IEP is developed each year by the student's education team, which consists of personnel from his or her school (e.g., school administrator, special and general educators, school psychologist), and the student's parent(s) or guardian(s), and may include the student and his or her friends. Related services personnel (e.g., speech-language therapist, occupational therapist, vision therapist) are identified on a student's IEP only when it is determined that additional support is "required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education" (as stipulated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA] of 1990, PL 101-476). In addition, paraprofessionals are increasingly being asked to assist with the development of IEPs. As a member of the IEP team, paraprofessionals can provide important and necessary information about supporting the student with disabilities. Ultimately, the entire education team should work together to create one set of unified learning priorities and objectives for the student. The IEP as a whole must include an accounting of the following:

- What the student can do at the present time
- What is considered most important for the student to learn next
- Who are the education team members who share responsibility for implementing the IEP
- How the student's progress will be measured and documented

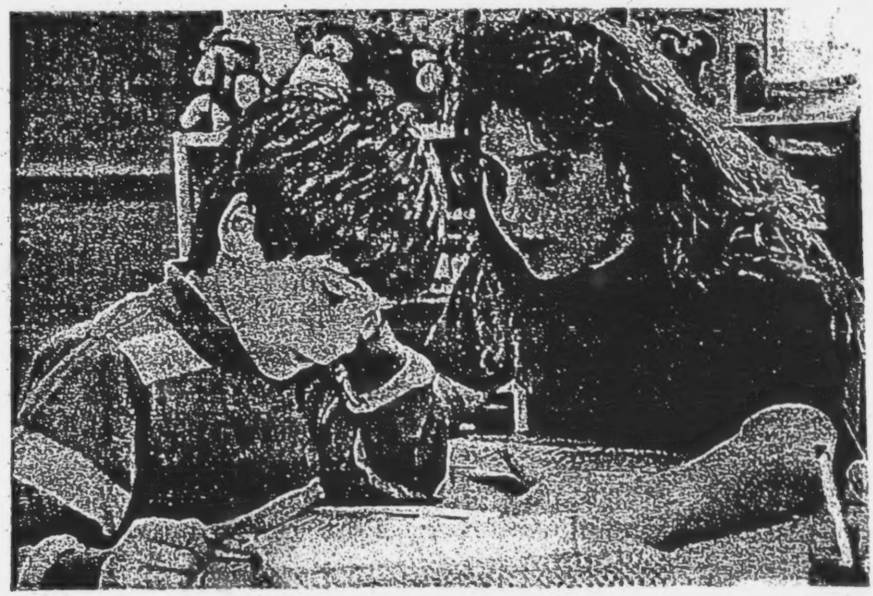
When your education team is providing support to a student with disabilities who has an IEP, it is important for each member of the team to have a working knowledge of the individual student's learning priorities and how to support the student in moving closer to mastering those learning priorities. Typically, the special educator reviews the student's learning priorities with the general educator and the paraprofessional, and then he or she demonstrates how each member of the team can support the student in accomplishing the learning priorities. During these training opportunities, the education team should develop strategies for how the student with disabilities can be supported by a variety of educators and personnel, not only by the paraprofessional. Creating a useful IEP is a critical aspect of instructional design, and this will enable the education team to work together in avoiding the student with disabilities becoming overly dependent on the paraprofessional, or the paraprofessional becoming overly dependent on the student with disabilities. Both types of overdependence have emerged in current research as problematic educational issues (Doyle, 1995). Failure to bring such an important issue as paraprofessional/student overdependence to the attention of the entire education team may result in poor instructional programming for the student. Because it is not the paraprofessional's responsibility to design or develop the student's learning priorities, a lack of clarity regarding the student's learning priorities or the roles of education team members in helping the student to accomplish these priorities must be addressed by team members immediately.

As a team, take time to review the IEPs of the students in your class. This review can provide a good opportunity to ensure that your entire education team has a shared understanding of each student's individualized learning priorities. Be certain to ask any questions that will increase your individual understanding of the student's learning priorities. As you review these documents, it is important to remember that IEPs are *confidential* documents. You may not discuss any of this information with other paraprofessionals, teachers, students, parents, or community members outside of the student's specific education team.

✎ How Does the Paraprofessional Use an IEP?

Paraprofessionals need to obtain and use information from students' IEPs every day. However, in some situations, IEP documents are not completed in ways that lend themselves to portability and usability on a daily basis. Therefore, if the special educator has not already done so, this is a good time for the team to transfer the information that the paraprofessional will need from the IEP documents to a more usable format. Refer to the "Individualized Education Program (IEP) Matrix" and the "Student Learning Priorities and Support" worksheets on pages 36 and 37, respectively, for two strategies that can facilitate this process.

As your education team transfers the information that paraprofessionals will need from the IEP document to a more usable format, it is critical that the paraprofessional understand the information as it is written. The education team should be



careful not to use jargon. It is also important that the paraprofessional's role and responsibilities in relation to the delivery of instruction are clear. One strategy to accomplish this clarification is to have your education team discuss the following questions:

- What is the role of the paraprofessional in supporting the special educator and the general educator to ensure that the student with disabilities is able to accomplish his or her learning priorities?
- How will the paraprofessional support the student with disabilities—without being overly intrusive—in accomplishing his or her learning priorities during class?
- When will other team members—not the paraprofessional—support the student with disabilities in the inclusive classroom in moving toward his or her IEP goals?
- Does the student with disabilities need specific adaptations in order to move toward accomplishing his or her learning priorities? If so, what is the paraprofessional's role in the development and subsequent implementation of the instruction that is supported by adaptations?

It is important to remember that the general educator, the special educator, and the paraprofessional all need to understand each student's learning priorities. In addition, each member of the education team needs to specifically understand the paraprofessional's role and responsibilities in relation to supporting the student with disabilities as this student moves toward accomplishing his or her learning priorities.

Why Are Student Schedules Important?

Each member of your education team will need to be familiar with every student's daily schedule. Although schedules may change or be modified over time, it is helpful for education personnel to know where the students with disabilities are throughout the school day. If the general and special educators have already completed a schedule for each student, your team should refer to that schedule. If general and special educators have not completed student schedules, refer to the "Individualized Education Program (IEP) Matrix" worksheet on page 36 or the "Student Learning Priorities and Support" worksheet on page 37 as a guideline for this task. Both of these worksheets serve multiple functions (e.g., tracking learning priorities and necessary support, daily class schedule, daily support schedule). Keep in mind that if your team fills out these worksheets in the chronological order of the student's day, the daily schedule will be listed in order.

STUDENT PROFILE

Directions: The information included in this worksheet is meant to provide the education team with background information about the student with disabilities. This profile can serve as the basis for a discussion to assist certified educators and the paraprofessional in becoming acquainted with the student. A separate student profile should be designed for each student.

NOTE: The information contained on this profile is confidential. You may discuss this information only with education team members in the context of planning or evaluating issues related to the student's participation in school. This information cannot be discussed with other paraprofessionals, teachers, students, parents, or community members outside of the student's specific educational needs.

Student: Sarah Home telephone: 555-1268

Parents: Mr. & Mrs. Green

General educator: Mrs. Brown Special educator: Mrs. Smith

Paraprofessional: Mrs. Elway

1. What are some of the student's strengths and responsibilities?

   Friendly
   Seems to enjoy science lab experiments

2. Over the past 6 months, in what areas has the student shown the most progress?

   Relationships-two new friends
   (consistency in choice making)

3. How does the student learn best? (circle one) What learning style is most successful with the student? (circle one)

   Visual-Linguistic Auditory [✓ Body-Kinesthetic]
   Musical-Rhythmic [✓ Interpersonal] Other:
   Other:

(continued)

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STUDENT PROFILE *(continued)*

4. How does this student communicate? (circle as many as apply)

Verbal
Letter or word board
[✓ Facial expressions]
Sign language
Objects
[✓ Eye gaze]
Hand gestures
Head movements
[✓ Picture symbols]
Other:

Does he or she need assistance with communicating? (circle one)

No [✓ Yes] Describe: Another person needs to present communication options to Sarah.

How do the student's peers assist with communication?

They present communication options.

5. What does the student enjoy (e.g., favorite types of activities, subjects)?

Science lab experiments, music, free time on the playground

6. What motivates the student?

Participating in small-group activities with Dan and Melanie

7. Who are the student's friends?

Melanie
Dan
James

(continued)

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STUDENT PROFILE *(continued)*

What do they do together in school?

Small-group activities
Eat lunch together and play at recess

What do they do together after school or on weekends?

They do not get together after school.

8. What are some of the ways the student participates in the general education classroom?

Classroom job with assistance of friends

9. In the past, what teaching strategies have worked well with the student?

Use of least intrusive prompts

10. In the past, what has worked well in terms of paraprofessionals assisting the general and special educators in supporting this student in general education classes?

Very important to support peers in interacting
Avoid 1:1 (adult-student) groupings
Supported participation in group activities

11. List any relevant physical or health information (e.g., medications, vision or hearing problems, ongoing health conditions) of which the paraprofessional should be aware. Describe any paraprofessional responsibilities in this area.

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INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) MATRIX

Directions: List the student's daily activities or class periods in the left-hand column. Then list the student's learning priorities across the top row. Place an "X" in each of the corresponding boxes where each learning priority will be addressed throughout the school day.

NOTE: This IEP matrix is designed to list *what* the student's learning priorities are, not *how* they are to be taught.

	IEP Goals						
Daily activities/Class periods	Makes choice between 2 options	Indicates "more"	Active in leisure time with peers	Activates Big Red switch	Uses calculator to check calculations		
Reading	X	X		X			
Science	X	X					
Gym			X				
Snack	X	X					
Math				X	X		
Lunch/recess	X	X	X		X		
Spelling				X			
Computer		X		X			

From Giangreco, M., Cloninger, C., & Iverson, G. (1993). *Choosing options and accommodations for children (COACH): A guide to planning inclusive education.* Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.; adapted by permission.

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STUDENT LEARNING PRIORITIES AND SUPPORT

Directions: In the top left-hand column, list the student's learning priorities that need to be addressed *across* the day regardless of location (e.g., greeting peers, using a communication device). In the remaining boxes in the left-hand column, list the learning priorities that are specific to the individual activities or classes. In the center and right-hand columns, list the necessary materials, supports, and adaptations that are necessary for the student to accomplish his or her learning priorities.

Student: Sarah Target date: Sept.-Oct.

Learning priorities for across the day	Materials	Support/Adaptations
• Participate during each class. • Bring necessary materials. • Move to and from classes with peers.	• Same as peers	• General educator • Peer reminder • Peers • Schedule (includes material listing)
Learning priorities for Reading (class)	Materials	Support/Adaptations
• Listen to stories with whole class. • Choose a book from the library and check it out. • Use a switch to activate taped story.	• Same as peers • Same as peers • Big Red switch, tape recorder, tape	• None • Peers, librarian • Peers, adult
Learning priorities for Science (class)	Materials	Support/Adaptations
• Participate in experiments. • Learn two new concepts per unit.	• Same as peers • Depends on the unit	• To be determined • To be determined
Learning priorities for Math (class)	Materials	Support/Adaptations
• Use a calculator to check work. • Work with peers to solve problems. • Time keeper in cooperative groups. • Use next-dollar approach to pay for lunch.	• Large-key calculator • Same as peers • Timer • Number line and money	• Peers, adult • Peers • Peers • Adult

From York-Barr, J., Doyle, M.B., & Kronberg, R.M. (1996b). *Creating inclusive school communities: A staff development series for general and special educators: Module 3b. Curriculum as everything students learn in school: Individualizing learning outcomes* (p. 3b, 47b). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.; adapted by permission.

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Unit 3
Activity Sheets and To Do Lists

Planning for Paraeducators

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Participant Activity "To Do" List

Activity: Schedule Fact-Finding

1. Form a group of three or four members.
2. Assign appropriate roles (e.g., facilitator, recorder, reporter).
3. Using the activity sheet **Schedule Fact-Finding**, each participant should individually review the six listed options and circle the one that most closely reflects his or her own situation.
4. Next, the small group should use the prompts 1, 2, and 3 in the directions of the activity sheet to guide their group discussion.
5. Participants are encouraged to make notes that may assist them with the practicum scheduling requirement.

Schedule Fact-Finding:

Directions: Read the list of six options listed below and individually circle the option that most closely reflects the scheduling for the paraeducators with whom you work. Next, in your small group, (1) share your selection, (2) indicate the option to which you aspire, and (3) discuss what level of scheduling detail you think is important to provide to paraeducators and substitute paraeducators.

1. The paraeducators have no written schedule -- they follow along with what is happening in the classroom and decisions are made on the fly.

2. The paraeducators have no written schedule --they follow my classroom written schedule.

3. The paraeducators have a written schedule that is limited to telling them where they should be at designated times.

4. The paraeducators have a written schedule that tells them where they should be at designated times and lists the students with whom they should be working.

5. The paraeducators have a written schedule that tells them where they should be at designated times, lists the students with whom they should be working, and includes what activity they should be doing.

6. The paraeducators have a written schedule that tells them where they should be at designated times, lists the students with whom they should be working, includes what activity they should be doing, and specifies the expected learning outcomes (if it is an instructional period).

Discussion Notes:

Participant Activity "To Do" List

Activity: Time-Use Activity

1. Form a group of three or four members.

2. Assign appropriate roles (e.g., facilitator, recorder, reporter).

3. Using the activity sheet **Time-Use Strategies**, first take turns offering ideas of things you currently do to use time effectively in working with paraeducators. Defer your judgment and record as many ideas as possible in a round-robin format. List the ideas in the left column marked "List things you already do." (7 minutes)

4. Repeat step 3, except this time generate new ideas (beyond what you already do, to what you *could* do). List these ideas in the right column labeled "List new ideas." (7 minutes)

Time-Use Strategies

List things you already do	List new ideas

Participant Activity "To Do" List

Activity: Instructional Planning

1. Form a group of three or four members.

2. Assign appropriate roles (e.g., facilitator, recorder, reporter).

3. Using the activity sheet **Instructional Planning Components for Paraeducators**, as a group make a list of possible plan components. Ask yourselves the question "What components (parts) of an instructional plan do paraeducators need to know?" Defer judgment when making your list. Rely on your own experiences and the readings for ideas (e.g., lesson introduction, objectives, materials, setting, definition of correct and incorrect responding, data collection method). (6 minutes)

4. After your group has made a list in the left-hand column, use the four remaining columns on the activity sheet to consider whether each component needs to be included in new or ongoing plans and the level of detail needed if so. Consensus need not be reached, but each participant should consider what makes sense to him or her; this will facilitate plan development in the practicum requirements. (15 minutes)

5. Be prepared to share your ideas and questions with the large group.

6. The instructor will facilitate a large-group discussion based on your small-group work. (12 minutes)

Instructional Planning Components for Paraeducators

Possible Plan Components	Needed for new plans: yes or no?	Level of detail needed: low, moderate, or high?	Needed for ongoing plans: yes or no?	Level of detail needed: low, moderate, or high?

Participant Activity "To Do" List

Activity: Noninstructional Planning

1. Form a group of three or four members.

2. Assign appropriate roles (e.g., facilitator, recorder, reporter).

3, Using the activity sheet **Noninstructional Planning Components for P paraeducators**, as a group make a list of possible plan components. Ask yourselves the question "What are the noninstructional tasks engaged in by paraeducators that require plans?" Defer judgment when making your list. Rely on your own experiences and the readings for ideas (e.g., personal care support, equipment management, playground supervision). (5 minutes)

4. After your group has made a list in the left-hand column, use the four remaining columns on the activity sheet to consider whether each component needs to be included in new or ongoing plans and the level of detail needed if so. Consensus need not be reached, but each participant should consider what makes sense to him or her; this will facilitate plan development in the practicum requirements. (7 minutes)

5. Be prepared to share your ideas and questions with the large group.

6. The instructor will facilitate a large-group discussion based on your small-group work. (8 minutes)

Noninstructional Planning Components for Paraeducators

Examples of Noninstructional Tasks That Require Plans	Plan needed for existing paraeducator?	Level of detail needed: low, moderate, or high?	Plan needed for new or substitute paraeducator?	Level of detail needed: low, moderate, or high?

Participant Activity "To Do" List

Activity: Strategies for Training Paraeducators

1. Instructor will first review common strategies for paraeducator training and invite the group to add to the list. (5 minutes)
2. Form a group of three or four members.
3. Assign appropriate roles (e.g., facilitator, recorder, reporter).
4. Using the activity sheet **Strategies for Training Paraeducators**, use the prompts and questions listed on the form to clarify the training strategies that you might use to support the work of paraeducators. (20 minutes)
5. Be prepared to share your ideas and questions with the large group.
6. The instructor will facilitate a large-group discussion based on your small-group work. (10 minutes)

Strategies for Training Paraeducators

List instructional and noninstructional tasks requiring training of paraeducators	Strategies used to provide training	Who should provide the training?	Intensity of training needed: low, moderate, or high?

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PARAPROFESSIONAL'S DAILY SCHEDULE

Directions: The classroom teacher, the special educator, and the paraprofessional need to work together to develop the paraprofessional's daily schedule. This schedule should reflect the paraprofessional's duties that are related to supporting the general learning environment as well as students with and without disabilities. After the schedule has been drafted, answer the question on the next page and, if necessary, revise the initial daily schedule.

Time	Typical activity or class	Paraprofessional's typical responsibilities
8:00	Arrival * Lockers, homeroom * Hang out with friends * Morning activities and class job	* Help with coat and boots * Prepare materials for whole class (no direct responsibilities with students)
8:45	Reading * Partner reading	* Implement lesson developed by classroom teacher
10:15	Science	* Assist student with disabilities with participation in lab
11:00	Snacks	* Develop material adaptation, set up learning centers
11:15	Gym	* Assist as directed by gym teacher
12:00	Lunch	* Assist student with disabilities to eat
1:00	Math	* Implement small group lesson developed by classroom teacher
1:40	Spelling	* Review words and dictation with whole class
2:00	Computer class	* Assist student with disabilities to activate switch

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DISCUSSION ABOUT THE PARAPROFESSIONAL'S DAILY SCHEDULE

Directions: After the paraprofessional's daily schedule has been developed, the classroom teacher, the special educator, and the paraprofessional should meet to discuss the question listed on this worksheet. The answer to the question may necessitate an immediate revision of the paraprofessional's daily schedule or a revision in the future.

In reviewing the paraprofessional's daily schedule, to what extent is he or she engaged in activities related only to the student with disabilities?

None of the time		Some of the time			All of the time
0	1	[✓ 2] ←	3	[✓ X]	5
		after discussion		*before discussion*	

As a team, discuss whether the level of interaction that the paraprofessional has only with the student who has a disability is appropriate. Keep in mind that when adults (e.g., paraprofessional, general and special educators) remain in close proximity to a student with disabilities, classmates are less likely to approach and interact with the student. As a team, you may discover that it is necessary to develop a formal plan to support the student with disabilities in becoming less dependent on the paraprofessional or other adult team members.

Initially, our team had the paraprofessional maintaining all of the responsibilities related to the student with disabilities. This potentially caused problems because the rest of the students in the class could not benefit from her help, and the student with disabilities needs instruction from certified teachers as well. After this discussion, we planned a better schedule and will monitor our time.

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Unit 4

Communicating with Paraeducators and Providing Feedback

Participant's Overview

Unit 4: Communicating with Paraeducators and Providing Feedback

Brief Description of Unit

The purpose of this unit is to provide information about and strategies for communicating with and providing feedback to paraeducators who support the education of students with disabilities in general education.

Hours of Instruction (in class format)

3 hours

Unit Objectives

Key: K = Knowledge, S = Skill (Knowledge objectives are addressed through readings and class activities; skill objectives are addressed through practicum activities.

1. Professionals will know information to share with paraeducators that establishes the importance of maintaining confidentiality in communications. (K)
2. Professionals who direct the work of paraeducators will know a variety of skills for communicating effectively with paraeducators. (K)
3. Professionals will know a variety of ways to give feedback to paraeducators about their implementation of instructional and noninstructional plans developed by educators and related services providers. (K)
4. Professionals will demonstrate skills in communicating with paraeducators, providing them with feedback about their roles and about their implementation of instructional and noninstructional plans developed by educators and related services providers. (S)

Preparing for the Unit

Required Readings:

Doyle, M.B. (1997). Maintaining confidentiality: Communicating with team members. In M.B. Doyle, *The paraprofessional's guide to the inclusive classroom: Working as a team* (pp. 61-71), Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

French, N. (1999). Supervising paraeducators — What every teacher should know. *CEC Today*, 6 (2), 12.

Lee, P.A. (1999). *Collaborative practices for educators: Strategies for effective communication*. Minnetonka, MN: Peytral Publications (pp. 10-12, 22-24, 34-36, 46-48, 56-58, 68-70, 82, 84, 87).

Schaffner, C.B., Buswell, B.E., Thousand, J., & Villa, R. (1999). Teams: Collaboration connects students. In B.E. Buswell, C.B. Schaffner, & A.B. Seyler (Eds.), *Opening doors: Connecting students to curriculum, classmates, and learning (2nd. ed.).* (pp. 9-12). Colorado Springs, CO: PEAK Parent Center.

Participant Preparation for Unit 4:

- Read the required readings **prior to class.**
- Based on required readings, write two questions that are relevant to you or your situation for discussion in class.
- Bring writing materials for note-taking and activities to class.
- Bring your Participant's Manual to class.
- Review the practicum requirements for Unit 4.

Practicum Requirements

You are encouraged to complete the unit's practicum activities each week, between class meetings if possible. Participants must complete at least two of the practicum requirements for Unit 4. An accompanying practicum checklist of the activities can found in the *Forms* section of this manual. In the event that a practicum requirement is not appropriate for your specific professional situation, alternate activities may be substituted based on negotiation with the instructor. The completed practicum checklist must be submitted to the instructor along with corresponding evidence of completed practicum activities.

Evaluation of Participant Learning

Participants are evaluated in three ways: (1) the *Self-Assessment Review* (to be completed after the last class session), (2) attendance and participation in class activities, and (3) completion of practicum requirements.

Suggested Supplemental Resources

Books and Articles

Idol, L., Nevin, A., & Paolucci-Whitcomb, P. (1999). *Collaborative consultation* (3rd ed.). Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

Lee, P.A. (1999). *Collaborative practices for educators: Strategies for effective communication.* Minnetonka, MN: Peytral Publications.

Pickett, A.L. (1999). *Strengthening and supporting teacher/provider-paraeducator teams: Guidelines for paraeducator roles, supervision, and preparation.* New York: National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services, Center for Advanced Study in Education, Graduate Center, City University of New York.

Pickett, A.L., & Gerlach, K. (1997). *Supervising paraeducators in school settings: A team approach.* Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

Villa, R.A., & Thousand, J. (2000), *Restructuring for caring and effective education: Piecing the puzzle together (2nd ed.).* Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Web Sites

National Clearinghouse for Paraeducator Resources
http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/CMMR/Clearinghouse.html

National Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services
http://web.gc.cuny.edu/dept/case/nrcp/

Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium
http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/para/

Unit 4 Required Readings

Communicating with Paraeducators and Providing Feedback

Unit 4 includes four brief readings to be read in preparation for the fourth class session. The Doyle (1997) excerpt provides information pertaining to the vital issue of confidentiality. The French (1999) article is a concise one-page summary regarding what every teacher should know about supervising paraeducators. Excerpts from a book by Lee (1999) provide numerous specific strategies that can be helpful in improving communication with anyone. Lee presents this information in easy-to-use tables and lists. The final reading in Unit 4 is a short chapter on collaborative teamwork by Schaffner, Buswell, Thousand & Villa (1999).

Source: M. B. Doyle (1997). *The Paraprofessional's Guide to the Inclusive Classroom: Working as a Team*, (pp. 61-68). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes. Reprinted with permission

CHAPTER 5

Maintaining Confidentiality

Communicating with Team Members

Objectives

- Develop proactive systems of communication.
- Understand the importance of maintaining student confidentiality.
- Learn guidelines for supporting student privacy.

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✎ Planning Communication Opportunities

There are many things that need to be communicated among general and special educators, paraprofessionals, and extended members of the education team. At the minimum, education teams need to communicate about issues related to individualized education programs (IEPs), curriculum planning and support, role clarification, and scheduling. Communication is the foundation of effective teamwork, and it occurs both in person and in writing. Your team needs to decide on both the frequency and type of communication strategies that will be most effective, considering the circumstances. The general or special educator on the team may already have formal or informal strategies to facilitate communication among team members. At this point it is important for the paraprofessional to understand how he or she fits into the communication loop. Of particular importance is how the entire team can communicate on a regular basis about individual student programming needs.

The "Team Communication" worksheet on page 66 provides an opportunity to clarify each team member's role and responsibility in developing more effective communication strategies. *As a team*, first discuss and identify when team meetings will be scheduled. Then, identify the topics that will be addressed. Finally, discuss and identify team members who need to be involved in discussions related to each of the identified topics. If your team has not discussed communication strategies, use this worksheet as a way to approach the topic. Whatever strategies your team develops, communication must occur on a regular (i.e., weekly or biweekly) and ongoing basis and in ways that are clear and efficient. Regular communication not only minimizes the likelihood of misunderstandings and isolation among team members but also maximizes the potential for proactive, effective problem solving and support.

Even with proactive systems of communication, situations with students will arise that require the paraprofessional to think and act quickly. When these situations arise, the paraprofessional should make the most appropriate decision based on the student's background and the specific circumstances. These spontaneous decisions are made frequently as a result of difficulties students encounter or initiate. The "Documenting Spontaneous Incidents" worksheet on page 68 is a helpful way for the paraprofessional to document relevant information regarding specific incidents. The information that the paraprofessional documents will provide important data and reflections for team decision making as to why the incident occurred and the most appropriate action to take in the future.

A Paraprofessional's Reflection

Open, honest, and direct communication is a very important part of developing a healthy education team. However, this type of communication does require that your team actually find the time to meet. My team meets at least every other week before school for 30 minutes. We use a formal agenda in order to stay focused on our tasks. We divide the agenda items into four categories:

1. Training needs for the paraprofessional, the general educator, or the special educator
2. Issues affecting the whole classroom
3. Upcoming instructional units
4. Individual student needs (e.g., develop new instructional plan, generate adaptation ideas for the new unit)

Our team meetings help us to remain focused on our own training needs as well as the needs of the students.

✎ Maintaining Confidentiality

As teams begin to discuss the information that it is necessary to know to support the learning and growth of students with and without disabilities, it is essential that every team member—including the paraprofessional—has a firm understanding of the legal responsibility to keep this information confidential. Given the specialized instruction and ongoing interaction between students with disabilities and their families and education team members, the paraprofessional will typically learn more information about these students and families than he or she learns about students without disabilities and their families. This information is personal and private and must not be shared beyond the family and the education team. Discussing this information is not only disrespectful but also potentially is illegal. It is the education team's legal responsibility to hold this information in a confidential and private manner. The paraprofessional may discuss information about a student or student's family with members of the student's education team only when it is directly relevant to the student's education. Such discussions are to take place in a private (e.g., classroom when students are not present, meeting room) rather than a public location (e.g., faculty lounge, hallway) in the school. It is impor-

tant to remember that the privacy rights of all students—with and without disabilities—and their families who are associated with the school community must be respected. Suggested guidelines regarding confidentiality are as follows:

1. Never discuss information about a student in a public place (e.g., faculty lounge, hallway, grocery store).
2. Never discuss information about one student with the parents of another student.
3. Never discuss information about one student with another student. (*Note:* If students with and without disabilities are engaged in a cooperative activity or peer tutoring situation, students may need to know specific information about each other in order to be mutually supportive. In such situations, it is important for the team [including the student's parents] to discuss what information is appropriate to share. For example, it may be helpful for a student without disabilities to know how to push his or her friend's wheelchair. It also might be important for a student with disabilities to know that his or her friend without disabilities has a short temper.)
4. Never discuss information about a student with school personnel who are not considered members of that student's service-providing team.

5. Go through the proper channels as developed by your school in order to obtain a student's records or other personal information.
6. Do not create personal files on a student or family.
7. Review the confidentiality policies of your specific school with your immediate supervisor. If you have questions regarding the policies and procedures regarding confidentiality in your school, speak to your supervisor immediately.

Every team member must remember that it is his or her responsibility to treat all students and adults with honor and respect.

As a team, review your school's confidentiality policies and procedures. Issues of confidentiality are even important enough to be discussed with highly experienced team members. Refer to the "Confidentiality Scenarios" worksheet on pages 69–70 for specific situations related to confidentiality that require a decision to be made. Read each situation and apply your school's policies in order to make a decision for each scenario. Every member's perspective will add to the richness of consideration in the decision-making process. In addition, the "Addressing Confidentiality" worksheet on page 71 presents a series of questions that all members of the team should address.

✎ Activity

A Situation You Know About

You have undoubtedly encountered or can anticipate encountering situations when confidentiality will be vital in your deciding how to respond or interact. Describe a situation in which a paraprofessional must make a decision regarding issues related to confidentiality. Resolve it to the best of your ability. Then ask a general educator and a special educator how they would expect you to respond in that situation.

TEAM COMMUNICATION

Directions: *As a team,* discuss and identify when you will meet at least 30 minutes biweekly to discuss and plan for upcoming curriculum and instruction. During the planning sessions, clarify each team member's roles and responsibilities in relation to supporting students with and without disabilities.

1. Scheduled meetings: Select one or more days for your team meetings and identify specific times.

   Day **Time**

   Monday ______________________________

   Tuesday ______________________________

   Wednesday ______________________________

   Thursday ______________________________

   Friday ______________________________

2. Topics to be addressed (circle as many as apply):

   Curricular

   Adaptations

   Teaching strategies

   Support strategies

   Other

3. Team members expected to participate (circle as many as apply):

   Classroom teacher Paraprofessional

   Special educator Extended team member

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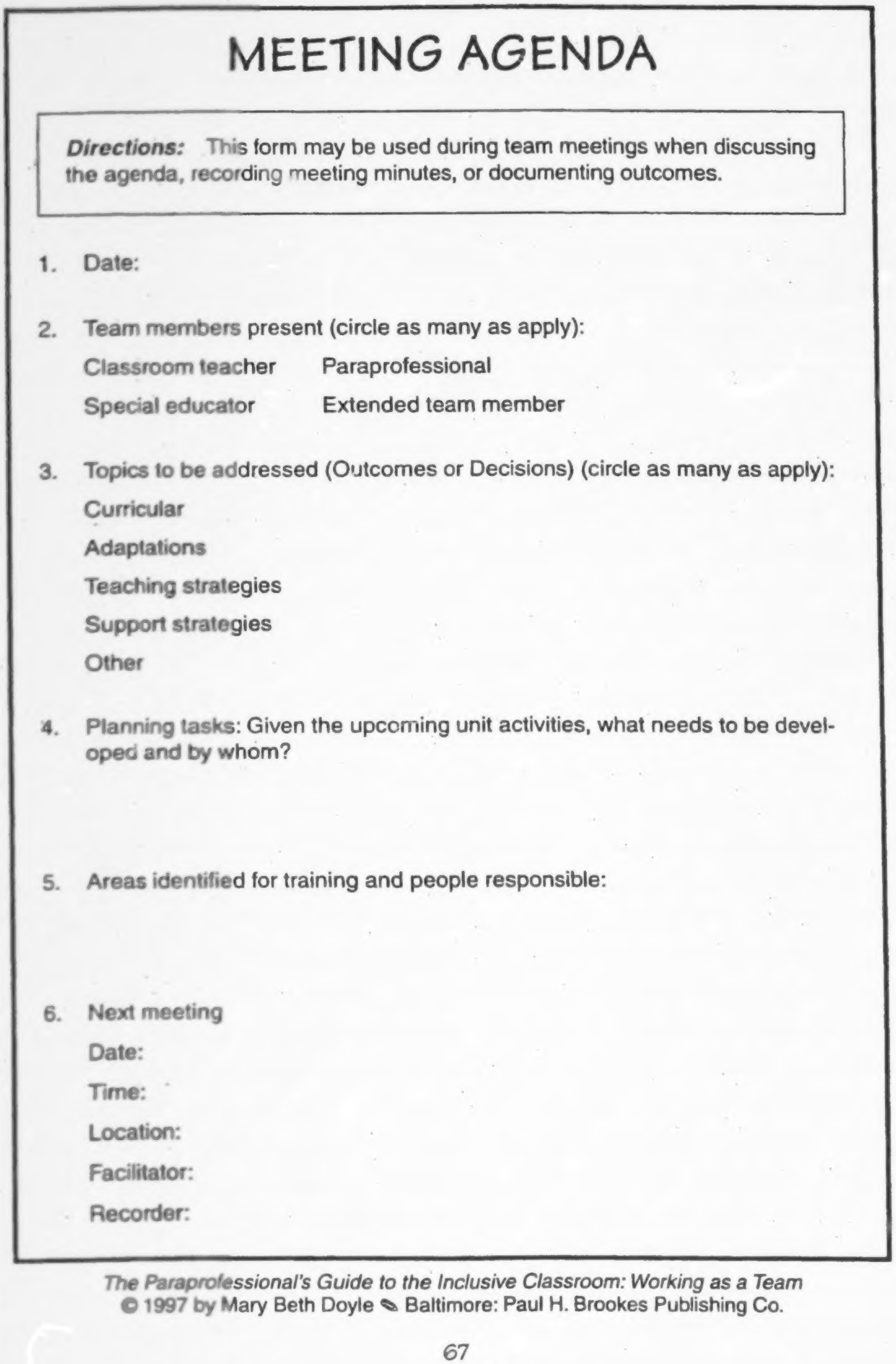

MEETING AGENDA

Directions: This form may be used during team meetings when discussing the agenda, recording meeting minutes, or documenting outcomes.

1. Date:
2. Team members present (circle as many as apply):

Classroom teacher	Paraprofessional
Special educator	Extended team member

3. Topics to be addressed (Outcomes or Decisions) (circle as many as apply):
   - Curricular
   - Adaptations
   - Teaching strategies
   - Support strategies
   - Other
4. Planning tasks: Given the upcoming unit activities, what needs to be developed and by whom?
5. Areas identified for training and people responsible:
6. Next meeting

   Date:

   Time:

   Location:

   Facilitator:

   Recorder:

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DOCUMENTING SPONTANEOUS INCIDENTS

Directions: This worksheet is to be used by paraprofessionals for documenting challenging situations that occur during the day or week when there is not an immediate opportunity to problem-solve with the general or special educator. The paraprofessional should bring this form *completed* to team meetings so that the team can discuss how he or she handled the situation and, in some cases, proactively plan the most appropriate action if similar situations arise in the future.

1. Describe the situation from a "before," "during," and "after" perspective.

Before: What do you remember happening to the student or in the environment right before the incident occurred?
During: What did the student say or do?
After: What happened immediately following the incident? How did you respond?

Before	During	After

2. What was the outcome of the situation? Please be specific.

Did this incident bring to mind any specific area of training that you would like to receive?

Did this situation make you think that your team needs to agree on a proactive plan to avoid a recurrence?

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Supervising Paraeducators—What Every Teacher Should Know

By Nancy French

The 1997 reauthorization of IDEA, for the first time in special education law, says that paraprofessionals may assist in the delivery of services to children with disabilities. It adds that paraprofessionals should be appropriately trained and supervised. While paraprofessionals have worked alongside teachers and related service providers to help students in special education for at least 40 years, neither teachers nor related service providers have received preparation to train or supervise paraeducators.

Principles of Paraprofessional Supervision

The following four principles guide teachers' work with paraprofessionals.

Actively Involve Paraprofessionals During orientation, teachers and paraprofessionals should identify and compare their work style preferences. Teachers should also identify programmatic needs, then compare those needs to paraprofessional's skills so they can create a personalized "job description" that helps the paraprofessional know exactly what is expected.

Conduct First-Hand Observations First-hand observations of the paraprofessional's required tasks enable feedback based on data rather than hearsay. Observations may be quite short–just five minutes. The key is to observe frequently–twice a week is not too much.

Focus Observations on Tasks Assigned to the Paraprofessional The most useful information comes from observations of the specific tasks assigned to the paraprofessional in the personalized job description. The tasks on which a person's performance will be evaluated should never be a surprise.

Use Written Data to Provide Feedback Written information is more useful than verbal information during conversations about the paraprofessional's work. A teacher may take notes or "script" the exact words the paraprofessional uses while giving directions to a student. Or, he or she may record how often a paraprofessional calls on girls vs. boys or note the duration of waiting time during a brief observation. Clear communication and positive working relationships result when teachers and paraprofessionals examine these records together.

Paraprofessional Vs. Professional Roles

Teachers must always maintain the following four professional roles.

Assessment–For special education eligibility or to use in instructional decisions.

Planning–For IEPs and long-term goals as well as for the adaptations and modifications to daily, weekly, and semester-long instructional sequences.

Collaborating and Consulting with General Educators and Families–To ensure that IEP goals are addressed, the student has access to the general education curriculum, and the family is appropriately involved in the child's education.

Supervising Paraprofessionals–To ensure that paraprofessionals contribute appropriately to the educational process, get adequate on-the-job training, direction, and performance feedback.

Of course, paraprofessionals can contribute to all four roles. A paraprofessional may collect student data, charting the frequency of certain behaviors. The teacher can use this data to make assessment decisions. Also, a paraprofessional may suggest or carryout lesson plans; modify instructional materials based on the directions provided by the general education or special education teacher; and under a teacher's direction, contact parents to set up meetings or share specific information about the child. In most states, school statutes specify the conditions under which teachers and paraprofessionals may be employed and the roles they may assume. Teachers need specific information about the laws and rules in their state, as well as information contained in professional codes of ethics and standards. (Contact CEC toll free at 888/CEC-SPED ext. 466 for a copy of "CEC Knowledge and Skills for Special Education Paraeducators.")

Resources for Teachers Who Must Supervise

The following literature provides valuable information for teachers.

- Time Management–Mamchak, P. S. (1993). Teacher's time management survival kit: Ready-to-use techniques and materials. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Managing Workplace Relationships–Blanchard, K. H. & S. Johnson. (1983). The one-minute manager. New York: Berkley Books.
- Teamwork–Larson, C. E. & F. M. J. LaFasto. (1989). Teamwork: What must go right/what can go wrong. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Pub.
- Needs-Based Negotiating –Fisher, R., W. Ury, & B. Patton. (1991). Getting to yes: Negotiating agreement without giving in. 2nd Edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Seminars in Supervisory Skills

Courses on paraprofessional supervision should include paraprofessional roles and responsibilities, as limited by ethics and the legal system; providing orientation to paraprofessionals; delegating tasks; planning for others; managing multiple schedules; providing on-the-job training; evaluating performance; and managing the work environment.

Paraeducator Supervision Academy

The Paraeducator Supervision Academy covers the skills mentioned above. To arrange a demonstration, contact the PSA-Outreach Project at 303/556-6464, e-mail: nfrench@ceo.cudenver.edu, or see their Web site, http://soe.cudenver.edu/ccel/para.

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Source: P. Lee (1999). *Collaborative Practices for Educators: Strategies for Effective Communication.* Minnetonka, MN: Peytral Publications.
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DEVELOPING EXPECTATIONS

What We Know

To develop expectations is to anticipate, think ahead, and predict occurrences and outcomes.

- ★ Developing expectations gives us a sense of control and confidence in relationship to future events.
- ★ When we develop expectations, we become pro-active rather than reactive in our interactions.
- ★ Thinking ahead about communication with others can assist us in producing positive outcomes rather than leaving it to chance.
- ★ Predicting a variety of possible occurrences challenges us to generate a range of responses which can lead to increased flexibility.
- ★ Anticipating the dynamics of an interaction can increase our ability to be more accepting of differing points of view.

Developing Expectations - What We DO

In developing expectations

WHAT WE OFTEN DO with KIDS	WHAT WE SOMETIMES DO with ADULTS
Explain/Co-create classroom rules and standards of behavior	Conduct our meetings in ways they've always been conducted
Discuss and display ground rules for participation	Expect newcomers to "figure out" the ground rules; rely on "word of mouth"(informal means)
Consider time allotments for task completion; make assignments accordingly	Attempt to "fit" the task into a prescribed time slot
Determine what times of day will be best for what types of learning	Assume that the traditional time allotted is all we have
Assess the interpersonal dynamics for effective instructional grouping	Recognize, accept, and figure that "what you see is what you get"
Formulate student-teacher roles and responsibilities	Allow and let the traditional role (e.g. psychologist) determine the responsibilities (psychometric assessment)
Anticipate daily crises, interruptions, and delays	Expect the task (IEP staffing) to be completed within a predetermined time frame (1 hour)
Predict that we will need to accommodate for individual learning differences	Expect everyone to process information in the same way (our way)

Strategies for Developing Expectations

1. Develop an agreed upon set of ground rules for effective commun-ication or professional meetings.
2. Orient new members and visitors to ground rules.
3. Anticipate what people with different points of view might say and how you would respond.
4. State aloud what you believe you can or cannot accomplish in allotted amount of time.
5. Generate their expectations at the beginning of a meeting.
6. Establish regular times for reviewing roles and responsibilities.
7. Ask colleagues what they expect from students, from parents, and from you.
8. Keep a log (record) of communication interactions. Analyze the log for patterns and themes.
9. Visualize your next communication interaction as positive and produc-tive.
10. Anticipate potential communication breakdowns that could occur at work.

PREPARING AHEAD

What We Know

To prepare ahead is to plan in advance what physical, mental, human, and material resources might be needed to increase the effectiveness of the upcoming lesson, meeting or interaction.

- ★ Preparing materials in advance reduces the likelihood we will have to take away from meeting time to get these materials.
- ★ Changing the physical arrangements can help prompt new ways of thinking. Arranging furniture ahead of time and in a variety of ways conveys that consideration has been given to the type of meeting.
- ★ Thinking ahead about the questions (not just the statements) we have assists us in creating a meaningful dialogue with our co-workers.
- ★ Preparing ahead, so the next meeting will be more effective than the last, increases the likelihood of positive change.
- ★ Planning ahead often results in a general sense of readiness among individuals.

Preparing Ahead - What We DO

In preparing ahead

WHAT WE OFTEN DO with KIDS	WHAT WE SOMETIMES DO with ADULTS
Decide/rehearse what to say	**Say the first thing that comes to mind**
Think about how to introduce an idea	**Figure we'll begin the way we've always started**
Prepare according to the learning outcomes we want	**Disregard our desired outcomes (outcomes is to get it done)**
Plan what questions to ask	**Prepare what we'll say not what we'll ask**
Select what materials will be used	**Use the existing forms to guide the meeting**
Consider possible room arrangements depending upon the lesson	**Meet in the same arrangement time after time**
Seek out human and material resources that will supplement (support) the lesson	**Assume that routine members will be the only ones needed**
Design practice activities to reinforce new skills	**Assume we have the skills we need and there's no need for practice**
Determine how to evaluate learning progress	**Neglect to consider the learning progress of adult co-workers**
Expect to monitor and respond to feedback from students so that we can improve the lesson	**Persist in conducting business in habitual ways regardless of feedback**

Strategies for Preparing Ahead

1. Establish a process where adults review and recommend the best places and room arrangements for meetings.
2. Develop the agendas for meetings based on colleagues questions and concerns.
3. Review on a regular basis team members' material and experiential resources.
4. Develop a process for observing and assessing "meeting" behaviors.
5. Review the purpose or intent of different types of meetings.
6. Set annual goals for the purpose of improving communication.
7. Devise methods of tracking progress on annual communication goals.
8. Establish practices for obtaining feedback from key consumers.
9. Create new ways to think about standard practices.
10. Use scheduled breaks during the year for predicting communication needs that might arise.

UNDERSTANDING PERSPECTIVES

What We Know

To understand perspectives is to acknowledge that everyone sees the world through his own view and to recognize that comprehending those diverse views will serve communication in positive and productive ways.

★ Understanding perspectives conveys respect and opens the lines of communication.

★ Taking diverse perspectives into account during problem solving increases the possibility of developing mutually satisfying outcomes.

★ Utilizing multiple perspectives can result in creating a variety of new responses and alternatives that would not be available from any single perspective.

★ Considering other perspectives and responding accordingly is simply "treating others as we would like to be treated ourselves."

Understanding Expectations-What We DO

In understanding other perspectives

WHAT WE OFTEN DO with KIDS	WHAT WE SOMETIMES DO with ADULTS
Recognize that they'll have a bad day now and then	Act like everyday is about the same
Accept that their emotional state will affect their productivity	Expect about the same productivity across time
Ask how they are when we perceive they're troubled	Avoid interacting or bringing up that they might be troubled.
Cut them some slack when we know of difficult circumstances in their lives	Expect them to leave their difficulties at home
Respond with empathy to a tough situations	Mind our own business
Accept that kids are at varying levels of skill development. What is hard for one may be easy for another	Expect adults to be similarly competent, confident, and productive
Demonstrate patience when they're trying something new	Fail to recognize they might be trying something new
Ask questions to determine "where they're coming from"	Make assumptions about "where they're coming from"
See it as a positive challenge when they disagree with us	Take it personally when they disagree with us

Strategies for Understanding Perspectives

1. Develop ways to encourage others to explain their perspectives.
2. Listen actively to people who have differing perspectives.
3. Learn about differences in adult learning styles.
4. Develop habits that increase understanding and decrease judgment.
5. Develop ways of thinking and speaking that are inclusive rather than exclusive.
6. Become a good observer of people.
7. Increase awareness of "self talk".
8. Read with the purpose of understanding opposing points of view on a controversial issue.
9. Develop new ways to get to know people.
10. Discover the importance of silence.

ASKING QUESTIONS

What We Know

To ask questions is to inquire, to want more information, and to seek knowledge.

- ★ Asking questions demonstrates an interest in learning.
- ★ Posing questions with others can convey that we are open-minded.
- ★ To ask questions indicates a desire to move beyond the status-quo.
- ★ Pursuing answers to questions assists the development of our creativity.
- ★ People feel empowered when others show their interest by asking questions.

Asking Questions - What We DO

In asking questions

WHAT WE OFTEN DO with KIDS	WHAT WE SOMETIMES DO with ADULTS
Wait until we have their attention	**Ask when *we're* ready**
Ask open ended questions	**Ask closed ended questions**
Ask questions with the intent of gaining new information	**Ask questions to be "polite"**
Find several ways to ask the same question	**Use limited variations of questioning**
Ask a lot of questions	**Make more statements than ask questions**
Welcome most of their questions	**Become defensive in response to some of their questions**
Ask varying levels of questions (e.g. knowledge, understanding, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, opinion)	**Ask questions mostly at the knowledge level**
Join them in asking questions	**Ask questions "at them"**
Ask questions that prompt reflective thinking	**Ask questions that require little reflection**

Strategies for Asking Questions

1. Increase your awareness of questioning behaviors.
2. In conversations/discussions balance question-asking with statement making.
3. Learn to ask open-ended questions.
4. Develop questions related to what the speaker is addressing.
5. Find ways to inquire that are perceived as non-threatening.
6. Take opportunities to find the meaning of a message by asking questions.
7. Become aware of the intent of questioning.
8. Recognize the value of questioning.
9. Use questioning as a method of gaining support from your colleagues.
10. Share your philosophical questions with colleagues.

LISTENING

What We Know

To listen is to make a conscious effort to hear what is being said.

- ★ When we listen well and actively, the communication is more efficient and effective.
- ★ Listening can increase our understanding of diverse perspectives.
- ★ When we are good listeners, others feel more accepted in our presence.
- ★ The better we listen, the more we have opportunities for meaningful connections with others
- ★ Listening is imperative to learning (we cannot learn if we do not listen).

LISTENING--What We DO

In listening

WHAT WE OFTEN DO with KIDS	WHAT WE SOMETIMES DO with ADULTS
Get down on their level (physically)	**Remain on whatever level we begin the interaction**
Give appropriate eye contact	**Attempt to look at them and something else simultaneously**
Attend well enough to ask questions related to what they just said	**Attend enough so that we can make our next point**
Allow the time they need to speak	**Want their speaking pace to meet our needs**
Listen for the feeling (emotions) behind the message	**Take the words at "face value"**
Watch for nonverbal cues along with what is said	**Pay little attention to nonverbal cues**
Give them our full attention	**Attend to many things at once**
Listen for messages/signs of understanding, growth, and change	**Expect the messages to be of a "status quo" nature**

Strategies for Listening

1. Learn to bring as much energy to listening as you do to speaking.
2. Establish routine checks to monitor listening behaviors.
3. Inform others when you need them as listeners.
4. Build listening times into established routines.
5. Learn to observe listening behaviors and their effects.
6. Increase awareness of selective listening.
7. Identify the barriers to effective listening.
8. Make conscious attempts to remove the barriers to effective listening.
9. Learn to attend to nonverbal messages.
10. Listen for the intent or purpose of a message.

SPEAKING CLEARLY

What We Know

To speak clearly is to send a message that is received
as we meant it to be.

- ★ When we learn to speak clearly we recognize that it is our responsi-bility to assure that effective communication has occurred.
- ★ Speaking clearly conveys a respect for the receiver and creates an atmosphere for mutual interaction.
- ★ When we learn to speak clearly, we learn to send messages that are more neutral in nature than judgmental.
- ★ The more clearly we learn to speak, the more likely the receiver will understand our message.
- ★ Learning to speak clearly will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of our communication interactions.

Speaking Clearly--What We DO

In speaking

WHAT WE OFTEN DO with KIDS	WHAT WE SOMETIMES DO with ADULTS
Explain what we mean	**Expect they'll understand what we mean**
Use "I" messages	**Use "you" or "they" messages**
Tell them what we want or need	**Keep our wants and needs to ourselves**
Individualize our message based on student needs	**Fail to consider the others' needs when we're speaking**
Find many ways to explain ideas	**Explain ideas in limited ways**
Look for new vocabulary to enhance understanding	**Use the "same old words" in communication**
Vary our pace according to the situation	**Proceed at a similar pace most of the time**
Compliment them on their achievements	**Fail to give them verbal recognition**
Tell them when their behavior is having a negative effect	**Tell someone else about their behavior**

Strategies for Speaking Clearly

1. Learn to use "I" messages.
2. Take responsibility for your spoken messages to be understood as you meant them.
3. Learn to ask for feedback regarding your spoken messages.
4. Become aware of the tone of your spoken messages.
5. Make it a habit to check for understanding during communication interactions.
6. Expand your speaking vocabulary.
7. Assess the situations where you have something to say yet avoid speaking.
8. Find ways to bring your voice to situations where you have avoided doing so.
9. Become a frequent observer of your speaking behavior.
10. Identify and observe role models whose speaking you would like to emulate.

Ten Tips
for
Collaborating Effectively with Paraprofessionals

- Start and end each day with the paraprofessional.
- Provide the paraprofessional with constructive feedback ASAP.
- Say "thank you" frequently for specific acts.
- Ask the paraprofessional how *you* can help.
- Demonstrate what you mean.
- Recognize the individual and unique contributions of each paraprofessional.
- Occasionally meet together away from the school or work area.
- Encourage the paraprofessional to keep a daily journal of activities, thoughts and feelings .
- Ask the paraprofessional what they would like to learn.
- Advocate for the paraprofessional's professional growth.

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Ten Tips
for
Using Nonjudgmental Language

- Avoid using the words *always* and *never*.
- Use "*yes, and*" rather than "*yes, but*".
- Ask people to tell you more; elaborate.
- Put as much energy into listening as you do speaking.
- Expect and welcome different points of view.
- Ask "*how*" and not "*why*".
- Give the ideas some "*think time*".
- Explain differences (rather than compare).
- Recognize your own "*need to be right*".
- Remember "*right*" is relative.

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Ten Tips
for
Drawing Out the Best in Others

- Ask others for their ideas and opinions.
- Listen well enough to ask related questions about the topic.
- Request their help when brainstorming about a current issue.
- Check to see that you are understanding where they are "coming from".
- Share common interests.
- When you have questions or need to discuss an issue, ask when is the best time to meet.
- Compliment others in authentic and specific ways.
- Observe what times of day are best for individual interactions.
- Put as much energy into listening to others, as you do when speaking to others.
- Encourage others to expand or elaborate on topics which they initiate.

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Source: B. E. Buswell, C. B. Schaffer & A. B. Seyler (Eds.), *Opening Doors: Connecting Students to Curriculum, Classmates, and Learning* (2nd. ed.) (pp. 9-12). Colorado Springs, CO: Peak Parent Center. Reprinted with permission

1

TEAMS: COLLABORATION CONNECTS STUDENTS

C. Beth Schaffner and Barbara E. Buswell
with Jacqueline S. Thousand and Richard A. Villa

Sally Norman was a third grade teacher at Oakwood School. She met with the school's principal, Marla Holmes, to discuss a new student, Jeffrey Wilson, who would be a member of her class next year. Jeffrey had attended a special education class across the district for the past three years. His IEP team and parents decided that he would now attend his neighborhood school and participate fully in a general education class with students his own age.

Ms. Norman is a good teacher who enjoys her job. She likes children and is committed to meeting their needs. She had some immediate concerns, however, about including Jeff with his special challenges in her class. She had not been trained to work with children who have special needs. She asked herself, "How will I know what to do? How can I be held responsible for his learning in addition to that of the other twenty-five children in my class? Where will I find the time to address everyone's needs?"

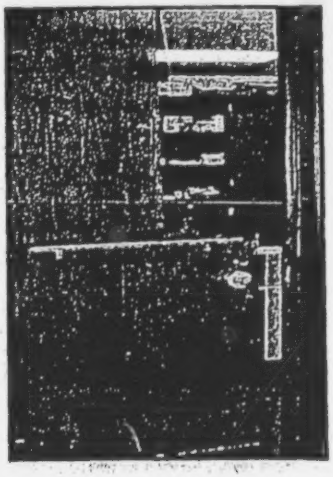
The principal reminded Ms. Norman about Julie Maestas, the special education resource teacher in the building, who would work with her to plan and assist with Jeff's inclusion.

When the principal spoke to Ms. Maestas about Jeff's attending Oakwood, she initially expressed some apprehension about being able to meet his needs, questioning just what her responsibilities would be. Since this was the first time that Oakwood Elementary had had a student with more intense needs, both teachers would have to re-evaluate their roles. Sally Norman's students' abilities typically had fallen within what is considered "normal" limits. In the past, Julie had provided special education services by working individually and in small groups with children on their areas of difficulty. Both teachers' roles and responsibilities would now change with Jeff coming to their school.

Since including a student with challenges such as Jeff's was a new experience, everyone had apprehensions and concerns. The principal insisted, however, that collaboration among all of them would make it possible to include Jeff.

WHY IS COLLABORATION AN IMPORTANT PRACTICE FOR SCHOOLS?

Collaboration has become a key concept in educational leaders' descriptions of what is needed to make successful, effective schools for all children. All students benefit when teachers share ideas, work cooperatively, and contribute to one another's learning. Sergiovanni (1994) states, "The bonding together of people in special ways and the binding of them to shared values and ideas are the defining characteristics of schools as communities. Communities are defined by their centers of values, sentiments, and beliefs that provide the needed conditions for creating a sense of "we" from "I" (p. 4). Collaboration has been linked with achieving outcomes for students with disabilities at preschool, elementary, middle, and high school levels *(Villa, Thousand, Nevin, & Malgeri, 1996).*



By collaborating, each individual is able to contribute what he or she knows best. Collaboration is the key to building and implementing support plans so that all students, including those who have disabilities, can participate and learn together successfully in school. The collaborative co-teaching arrangements described as "teaching teams" are being used in some model schools to educate all students, including students with severe disabilities, in general education classrooms in their neighborhood schools. A teaching team is defined as "an organizational and instructional arrangement of two or more members of the school and greater community who distribute among themselves planning, instructional, and evaluation responsibilities for the same students on a regular basis for an extended period of time" *(Thousand & Villa, 1990a, p. 152).* Teams can vary in size and in composition, involving any possible combination of the following key members:

- the student and the student's parents
- classroom teachers
- specialists *(special educators, therapists, counselors, health professionals, etc.)*
- the student's classmates
- school administrators
- instructional assistants
- student teachers

The inclusion of the student and the family on the team is important. Parents are the primary advocates for their children. Families' commitment to the child's success extends beyond concern for current schooling to the big picture of the child's life and future. This perspective is needed to determine goals for the child as well as to develop the support plans to achieve those goals. One parent conveys, "Parents should be thought of as scholars of experience. We are in it for the distance. ...We have our doctorate in perseverance. We and the system must be in concert or the vision shrinks" *(Thousand & Villa, 1989, p. 100).*

HOW DO COLLABORATIVE TEAMS OPERATE IN SCHOOLS?

The collaborative team offers a framework through which the unique skills of each member can be tapped. Some examples of team collaboration are:

- Collaborative consultation (a general educator, a special educator, and others meeting on a regular basis to develop strategies for supporting a particular student)
- Team teaching (a general education and a special education teacher planning and teaching lessons together)
- Peer coaching (teachers modeling and providing feedback about effective teaching techniques for each other)
- The special education teacher planning and teaching a lesson to the whole class on a regular basis - (e.g. a special education teacher facilitating affective learning lessons where students explore and practice how to accept and get along with each other)
- A person not typically on a student's team but one with whom the child has a positive relationship helping with some part of a student's support (such as assisting a child to make new friends and participate with other students before and after school)

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Planning together to make schools more responsive to students' individual needs may take extra effort, time, and coordination of schedules. District-wide administrators can play a key role by promoting policies and practices that encourage collaboration. Principals can create opportunities and incentives for teachers to work together. Principals who support collaborative models in their schools have used some of the following strategies: developing a master school schedule that allows time for teams to meet, making resources available (such as substitute teachers to fill in when team members are planning), and expanding the use of in-service training time to enable instructional staff to learn together *(Thousand & Villa, 1995)*.

CHANGING ROLES

The individual student's needs define the actions and activities for which the team assumes responsibility. However, the role of the collaborative team is broader than that of the traditional planning team. In addition to planning, a collaborative team shares responsibility for instruction, necessary accommodations or modifications, and evaluation. The team also assumes responsibility for coherence and integration of priorities throughout the student's day. For example, team members assure that goals are addressed including developing friendships, improving behavior, speaking clearly, or telling time. Schools that try collaborative teaming report that it requires reconceptualizing many long-held beliefs and habits which have become comfortable over time.

One of the most significant areas of reconceptualization is the way one views the student, assesses the student's needs, and determines how these needs will be met. A traditional way of viewing students with disabilities involved a "fix-it" approach with various specialists working to remediate the child's deficits in their particular specialty whether it be speech therapy, remedial reading, counseling, etc. This traditional approach often caused fragmentation of services and lack of continuity in the school experience of the child. A different way of supporting students is to look at the individual as a whole being, an ecosystem in which each area of growth is dependent on how needs in all the other areas are being met. Taking the analogy a step further, the child's team should constitute an ecosystem as well. Team members need to assure that all of a child's needs are met rather than only assuming the roles for which they were trained. On a collaborative team, members may well play new roles based on their personal strengths and the immediate and long-term needs of the particular student. This benefits the student by distributing the creative insights and expertise of each person beyond the group of students for which he or she is traditionally responsible and beyond the limits of his or her discipline. As in any ecosystem, there must be balance.

Sally Norman, Julie Maestas, Marla Holmes, the Wilsons, and other members of Jeff's team learned that they each have unique qualities and areas of expertise. As a result of including Jeff at Oakwood School, they all began to perceive their roles differently.

Julie saw that she could be a valuable resource to general educators because of her ability to analyze and break down material into meaningful, achievable components so that Jeff learned successfully. Sally Norman learned that in many ways Jeff's goals and needs were not unlike those of other students' and could be met in her classroom with the support of other team members. She also realized how important regular class membership and participation were to Jeff's education, and how much she was able to contribute to his learning because of her expertise with third grade curriculum. With support and input from the principal, specialists, Jeff's parents, and the rest of the team, Sally gained confidence and skills to meet more creatively and appropriately the needs of all her students.

Jeff's parents were important team members whose expertise and long-range vision for his future were essential in determining how he was educated in school. The other team members recognized the value of Mr. and Mrs. Wilson's participation. The Wilsons were good at creating ways to adapt curricula and meet Jeff's support needs at school because of their years of experience in meeting the challenges which Jeff's disabilities presented.

Marla Holmes, the principal, clearly saw the importance of being a key player in this process by setting the tone for the whole school. Her ongoing commitment to collaborate in order to better meet diverse needs provided a positive model for the staff and students and increased their skills in better educating all Oakwood students.

WHAT ARE OTHER BENEFITS OF USING THE TEAM APPROACH?

Teachers who participate on collaborative teams report that this orientation is a very useful practice. One teacher who experienced collaborative teaming states: "We discuss kids together. 'I'm having a problem with Bobby. Does anyone have any ideas?' And another teacher will say, 'Well, in my class, here's what worked...' So, you're not alone. You're in a whole support system" *(Chion-Kenney, 1987, p. 20)*.

There are a number of benefits of collaborative teams. Collaboration allows teams to capitalize on the unique talents, skills, knowledge, experiences, and diversity of team members. It facilitates creative problem-solving and shared responsibility for addressing challenges. Team members receive positive emotional and moral support when they work together. Using specialists and teachers in a collaborative manner can better meet the needs of all students by creating a lower student-teacher ratio *(Thousand & Villa, 1990b)*. Finally, members of effective teams grow individually and collectively, particularly when they take time to reflect upon how they are working together. This collaboration facilitates opening doors for students.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT USING COLLABORATIVE TEAMING TO MEET STUDENTS' DIVERSE NEEDS, HELPFUL RESOURCES ARE:

Buswell, B. E., & Schaffner, C. B. (1990). Families supporting inclusive schooling. In W. Stainback & S. Stainback (Eds.), Support networks for inclusive schooling: Interdependent integrated education (pp. 219-229). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Harris, K. C. (1990). Meeting diverse needs through collaborative consultation. In W. Stainback & S. Stainback (Eds.), Support networks for inclusive schooling: Interdependent integrated education (pp. 123-137). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Pugach, M. C., & Johnson, I. J. (1995). Collaborative practitioners: Collaborative schools. Denver: Love Publishing Co.

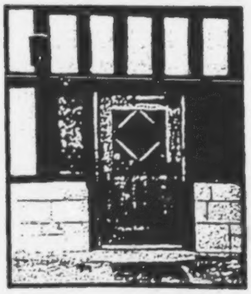
Quick, T. (1995). Successful team building. New York: American Management Association.

Thousand, J., & Villa, R. (in press). Collaborative teams. A powerful tool in school restructuring. In R. Villa & J. Thousand (Eds.), Restructuring for caring & effective education: Piecing the puzzle together. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Thousand, J. S., & Villa, R. A. (1990). Sharing expertise and responsibilities through teaching teams. In W. Stainback & S. Stainback (Eds.), Support networks for inclusive schooling: Interdependent integrated education (pp. 151-266). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Villa, R., & Thousand, J. (1996). Student collaboration: The essential curriculum for the 21st century. In S. Stainback & W. Stainback (Eds.), Inclusion: A guide for educators (pp.171-191). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Villa, R., Thousand, J., Nevin, A., & Malgeri, C. (1996). Instilling collaboration for inclusive schooling as a way of doing business in public schools. Remedial and Special Education, 17(3), 169-181.



Unit 4

Activity Sheets and To Do Lists

Communicating with Paraeducators and Providing Feedback

292

Participant Activity "To Do" List

Activity: Confidentiality Scenarios

1. Form a group of three or four members.

2. Assign appropriate roles (e.g., facilitator, recorder, reporter).

3. Using the **Confidentiality Scenarios** activity sheet, chose someone to read the first scenario ("Student to Student") out loud and then use the discussion questions to facilitate discussion. Record insights and questions to share with the large group. (6 minutes)

4. Chose someone to read the second scenario ("Faculty Lounge Talk") out loud and then use the discussion questions to facilitate discussion. Record insights and questions to share with the large group. (6 minutes)

5. Chose someone to read the third scenario ("Community Helpers") out loud and then use the discussion questions to facilitate discussion. Record insights and questions to share with the large group. (6 minutes)

6. All participants should reconvene to discuss their insights and questions as a large group. (5 minutes)

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CONFIDENTIALITY SCENARIOS

Directions: Several situations related to confidentiality that require a decision to be made are presented below. Read each of the situations and apply your school's policies in order to make a decision for each scenario. Then discuss your response with other team members.

Student to student

Sue is a new paraprofessional at Smith High School. She is 20 years old. Sue went to Smith High School as a student, so she knows many of the teachers and several of the students. Her primary responsibilities are related to supporting two students with moderate intellectual disabilities in several inclusive classrooms.

Sue is trying to figure out how to support the two students in their history class. She is very frustrated and has decided to solicit input from several other students in the class. She meets with the student's classmates during her lunch break and describes to the students without disabilities what she believes are the challenges and the learning priorities of the students with disabilities. The students without disabilities generate a wide variety of strategies that may potentially be supportive of the students with disabilities. At the end of the lunch break, Sue feels excited and very positive with the outcome of this informal lunch chat. As a matter of fact, she has decided to have lunch with these students once a week to solicit their ideas and feedback related to the educational program of the student with disabilities.

Discussion: Has Sue broken any rules about confidentiality? If so, which ones? How? What could she have done differently?

Key: In most schools this would represent a breach in confidentiality. Sue should have brought her questions and concerns to her team. It is inappropriate to discuss issues related to a student—with and without disabilities—with any other student. It is also inappropriate for Sue to establish ongoing meetings with students.

Faculty lounge talk

Brian is a paraprofessional who supports a student with severe disabilities in an inclusive third-grade classroom. He has been a paraprofessional in the school for about 5 years and is widely known and respected by other paraprofessionals as well as many faculty members.

(continued)

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CONFIDENTIALITY SCENARIOS *(continued)*

Brian walks into the faculty lunchroom and sits down with several paraprofessionals and teachers. As he tunes into the discussion, he notices that the topic of conversation has to do with the student he supports. He hears several comments made about the student's family. As Brian is becoming increasingly uncomfortable, one of the teachers turns to him and asks, "Brian, is that true about Mrs. Smith?"

Discussion: How should Brian respond? What is Brian's responsibility in the specific situation? What is Brian's responsibility with his team afterward?

Key: Brian should respond. His response should explain that it would be a breach of confidentiality to respond to their inquiry. For example, he might say, "I'm not comfortable discussing the student's family life" or "It is my understanding that it would be a breach of confidentiality to discuss this type of information in this context." Brian should document the entire situation and discuss the incident with his team during the next scheduled meeting.

Community helpers

Pat is a paraprofessional who supports several students who have challenging behavior at the middle school. She has been a paraprofessional for many years. Pat is widely known in her community for her volunteer work at the local youth center.

One of the students that Pat supports attends the youth center regularly. One afternoon Pat notices that the student is beginning to have some difficulty managing some of his behaviors. Pat has learned several behavioral management techniques to support this student during school.

Discussion: What should Pat do? Should she intervene at the youth center with the behavioral management techniques that she learned at school? If so, when another volunteer asks her what she did and why she did it, should Pat describe the behavior management strategy?

Key: This situation is a bit more challenging. It is still inappropriate for Pat to discuss the specifics of the student's program with community members. As a volunteer who has responsibilities at the community center, Pat should approach the student's parents and voice her concerns. It is important to remember that Pat would do the same thing if the student did not have disabilities.

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ADDRESSING CONFIDENTIALITY

Directions: Members of the education team need to meet to discuss the policies and procedures related to confidentiality as they apply to both students with and without disabilities, as well as their families.

1. How is "confidentiality" defined in our school policies?

2. What are the policies and procedures in this school related to confidentiality?

3. What are the expectations of the members of our team regarding confidentiality? How can our team support one another in maintaining respectful interactions and confidentiality in relation to the students and their families with whom we work?

4. How will we ensure that confidentiality is maintained in our daily work with students and their families?

5. What do we do when we are in situations in which we believe confidentiality is being breached? What are some phrases that we might use to remind another person of this issue?

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Participant Activity "To Do" List

Activity: Effective Communication

1. Form a group of three or four members.

2. Assign appropriate roles (e.g., facilitator, recorder, timekeeper).

3. Refer to page 11 in Lee (1999), "Developing Expectations... ." As a group, review each of the pairs of items under "What We Often Do With Kids" and "What We Sometimes Do with Adults" and decide which ones of these communication skills are in the greatest need of attention. Record your responses next to the entries using whatever system works for you (e.g., +/-, circling, numeric rating). Share any specific strategies you have used that support "Developing Expectations." Discuss how these skills affect communication between you and other team members. (12 minutes)

4. Repeat step 3 for "Preparing ahead" (Lee, 1999, p. 23). (12 minutes)

5. Repeat step 3 for "Understanding Expectations" (Lee, 1999, p. 35). (12 minutes)

After a break, form new groups so that you are working with a different group of people.

6. Repeat step 3 for "Asking Questions" (Lee, 1999, p. 47). (12 minutes)

7. Repeat step 3 for "Listening" (Lee, 1999, p. 57). (12 minutes)

8. Repeat step 3 for "Speaking Clearly" (Lee, 1999, p. 69). (12 minutes)

Participant Activity "To Do" List

Activity: Professional Roles in Providing Feedback

1. Form a group of three or four members.
2. Assign appropriate roles (e.g., facilitator, recorder, reporter).
3. Using the activity sheet **Professional Roles in Providing Feedback to Paraeducators**, discuss, as a group, your responses to the six questions posed on the form and record individually relevant information in the spaces provided. (25 minutes)
4. Be prepared to share your ideas and questions with the large group.
5. The instructor will facilitate a large-group discussion based on your small-group work. (10 minutes)

Professional Roles in Providing Feedback to Paraeducators

Questions to consider	What currently is done?	What would make it better?
1. How frequently do you provide informal feedback to paraeducators?		
2. Is your feedback specific and constructive?		
3. How frequently do you make more formal observations of a paraeducator's instructional roles?		
4. Do you have a set of guidelines or forms that guide your observations?		
5. What are the specific components you consider when observing a paraeducator's implementation of teacher-planned instruction?		
6. Have you involved paraeducators in designing the feedback process or asked them what type of feedback would help to improve their work in the classroom?		

Forms

Practicum Requirements

Directions: For all practicum requirements, use the following pages as a checklist of completion, indicate the date completed, and attach evidence of completion. Hand in this checklist and accompanying evidence of completion to the instructor.

Remember, you must complete at least two practicum activities for each unit. You may propose alternative practicum activities that make sense in your situation. Alternatives must be approved by the instructor in advance.

Unit 1: Welcoming, Acknowledging, & Orienting Paraeducators

☐ 1. Complete the Welcome Interview (found in Unit 1 Activity Sheets section of this manual) with at least one paraeducator and the appropriate teacher and special educator.

Date of completion: ____________________

Evidence attached: ____________________

☐ 2. Identify three actions to take to welcome the paraeducator in the classroom or acknowledge his or her work. The participant should be prepared to share her or his actions with the group and the reactions of the paraeducator.

List here:

__ 1. ____

__ 2. ____

__ 3. ____

Date of completion: ____________________

☐ 3. Use ideas developed in class (at least as a starting point) to work with your paraeducator to determine to which aspects of the school, classroom, and students he or she needs to be oriented. Use the Categories of Orientation for Paraeducators worksheet (found in Unit 1 Activity Sheets section of this manual).

Date of completion: ____________________

Evidence attached: ____________________

Unit 2: Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities of Paraeducators and Other Team Members

☐ 4. Develop a plan for clarifying the roles of paraeducators in the classroom that includes both overlaps and distinctions between professional and paraprofessional roles. Make this plan short and useable for you! If appropriate, link this plan to your school's existing or proposed job description for paraeducators.

Date of completion: ______________________

Evidence attached: ______________________

☐ 5. Meet with a paraeducator, teacher, and special educator to discuss the current status of "helping or hovering" in the classroom and identify, in writing, at least two things to do differently.

Date of meeting: ____________ Length of meeting: ____________

List of at least two things to do differently:

____

____

____

____

☐ 6. Clarify the roles of various professionals who work with your paraeducator. Develop a one-page plan that specifies important information (e.g., Who directs what? Who is the primary contact for the paraeducator? If the paraeducator is being directed by more than one professional, how is that communicated within the team?) Make your plan useable for you!

Date of completion: ______________________

Evidence attached: ______________________

Unit 3: Planning for Paraeducators

☐ 7. Develop a written schedule for your paraeducator that includes an appropriate level of detail for the situation (e.g., enough to be useful; not so much as to be cumbersome or impractical). Make this plan short and useable for you!

Date of completion: ______________________

Evidence attached: ______________________

☐ 8. Design an instructional planning form that you can use to develop written plans for paraeducators and substitute paraeducators. Design the form so that it has places to record all the information you think is vital in such a plan. Complete the form for at least one instructional lesson where you would really use it—then use it with your paraeducator and seek his or her input on how it worked and how it might be improved.

Repeat the same process in designing and using a noninstructional planning form.

Date of completion: ______________________

Evidence attached: ______________________

☐ 9. Identify at least five job tasks for which a paraeducator or substitute paraeducator needs training. Include both instructional and noninstructional tasks. For each task identify the training strategy or combination of strategies to be used. Involve paraeducators by seeking their input on how they think they might best learn each task. Also, identify the person who will provide the training and create a schedule for when the training will occur. For example, when will it begin and end if it is a short-term training need (e.g., clerical)? If it is an ongoing task (e.g., instructional), when will it be initiated and at what intervals will training occur? Implement the plan. Make your plan useable for you!

Date of completion: ______________________

Evidence attached: ______________________

Unit 4: Communicating with Paraeducators and Providing Feedback

☐ 10. Conduct a meeting with your paraeducator and other team members to clarify confidentiality policies and expectations. Refer to the Unit 4 reading by Doyle (1997, p. 61) for questions to guide your meeting.

Date of completion: ____________________

Evidence attached: ____________________

☐ 11. Identify at least one communication skill from each of the six categories found in the Unit 4 reading by Lee (1999) that you will take action to improve in your interactions with your paraeducator. Tell your paraeducator which communication skills you are seeking to improve and request feedback from him or her twice weekly for two weeks.

Date of completion: ____________________

Evidence attached: ____________________

☐ 12. Develop two practical forms for providing feedback to paraeducators, one for ongoing, informal feedback and one for more formal feedback based on direct observation of the paraeducator implementing teacher-planned instruction. Implement your plans. Make your plan useable for you!

Date of completion: ____________________

Evidence attached: ____________________

Self-Assessment Review

Name:
Date:

Job Title:
Course Instructor:

Years of Experience:
Course Site:

PURPOSE: This Self-Assessment Review is designed to assist course participants in considering their own work with paraeducators **after completing** the mini-course titled "Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators." It should help identify areas of progress and areas of continuing need.

DIRECTIONS: For each listed item circle the number that most closely reflects your status at this time. Respond based on what you do personally. If you work with more than one paraeducator, provide a response considering your overall situation. Your selection of a number (1-8) should reflect any changes that have occurred since your rating of yourself before the mini-course.

#	Content	I don't do this, and I don't know enough about it.		I know it's important, but I just don't get to it.		I'm doing it, but not enough.		I'm doing it and feel it's going well.	
1	Paraeducators with whom I work are welcomed in class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2	Paraeducators with whom I work are well oriented to the school (e.g., places, people, policies, philosophy, practices, procedures).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3	Paraeducators with whom I work are well oriented to the classroom (e.g., routines, practices, instructional programs).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

#	Content	I don't do this, and I don't know enough about it.		I know it's important, but I just don't get to it.		I'm doing it but not enough.		I'm doing it and feel it's going well.	
4	Paraeducators with whom I work are well oriented to the students with whom they work (e.g., knowledgeable about: IEP goals, participation in general education curriculum, supports needed, aspects of disability that affect learning, motivations, interests).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
5	The roles of the paraeducators with whom I work are explicitly stated and match their knowledge and skills.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
6	My role and the roles of the other professional staff in relation to the paraeducators are clear and well understood by all team members.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
7	Paraeducators with whom I work have a daily written schedule of duties to follow.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

#	Content	I don't do this, and I don't know enough about it.	I know it's important, but I just don't get to it.	I'm doing it but not enough.	I'm doing it and feel it's going well.
8	Paraeducators with whom I work have written plans to follow when implementing teacher-planned instruction and other duties.	1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8
9	Paraeducators with whom I work receive initial and ongoing training to carry out their assigned duties.	1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8
10	Paraeducators with whom I work have mechanisms to communicate with me on an ongoing basis.	1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8
11	Paraeducators with whom I work receive ongoing feedback on their job performance, both formally and informally.	1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8
12	Paraeducators with whom I work have a thorough understanding of appropriate confidentiality practices and school policies on the topic.	1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8

Unit 1: Participant Evaluation

Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators

Unit 1: Welcoming, Acknowledging & Orienting Paraeducators

Student name (optional): ____________________ Date: ____________

Directions: Please check the box next to the statement that most closely reflects your opinion regarding the following questions.

1. How **important** were the objectives for Unit 1?
   ☐ very important
   ☐ important
   ☐ somewhat important
   ☐ not important

2. How **relevant** were the required readings for Unit 1?
   ☐ very relevant
   ☐ relevant
   ☐ somewhat relevant
   ☐ not relevant

3. How **useful** were the activities for Unit 1?
   ☐ very useful
   ☐ useful
   ☐ somewhat useful
   ☐ not useful

4. How **relevant** were the practicum requirements for Unit 1?
   ☐ very relevant
   ☐ relevant
   ☐ somewhat relevant
   ☐ not relevant

5. Please use the rest of this page to make suggestions for improving the objectives, required readings, activities, and practicum requirements for Unit 1.

Unit 2: Participant Evaluation

Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators

Unit 2: Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities of Paraeducators and Other Team Members

Student name (optional): ______________________ Date: ______________

Directions: Please check the box next to the statement that most closely reflects your opinion regarding the following questions.

1. How **important** were the objectives for Unit 2?
   - ☐ very important
   - ☐ important
   - ☐ somewhat important
   - ☐ not important
2. How **relevant** were the required readings for Unit 2?
   - ☐ very relevant
   - ☐ relevant
   - ☐ somewhat relevant
   - ☐ not relevant
3. How **useful** were the activities for Unit 2?
   - ☐ very useful
   - ☐ useful
   - ☐ somewhat useful
   - ☐ not useful
4. How **relevant** were the practicum requirements for Unit 2?
   - ☐ very relevant
   - ☐ relevant
   - ☐ somewhat relevant
   - ☐ not relevant
5. Please use the rest of this page to make suggestions for improving the objectives, required readings, activities, and practicum requirements for Unit 2.

Unit 3: Participant Evaluation

Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators

Unit 3: Planning for Paraeducators

Student name (optional): ____________________ Date: ______________

Directions: Please check the box next to the statement that most closely reflects your opinion regarding the following questions.

1. How **important** were the objectives for Unit 3?
   - ☐ very important
   - ☐ important
   - ☐ somewhat important
   - ☐ not important
2. How **relevant** were the required readings for Unit 3?
   - ☐ very relevant
   - ☐ relevant
   - ☐ somewhat relevant
   - ☐ not relevant
3. How **useful** were the activities for Unit 3?
   - ☐ very useful
   - ☐ useful
   - ☐ somewhat useful
   - ☐ not useful
4. How **relevant** were the practicum requirements for Unit 3?
   - ☐ very relevant
   - ☐ relevant
   - ☐ somewhat relevant
   - ☐ not relevant
5. Please use the rest of this page to make suggestions for improving the objectives, required readings, activities, and practicum requirements for Unit 3.

Unit 4: Participant Evaluation

Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators

Unit 4: Communicating with Paraeducators and Providing Feedback

Student name (optional): ______________________ Date: ______________

Directions: Please check the box next to the statement that most closely reflects your opinion regarding the following questions.

1. How **important** were the objectives for Unit 4?
   - ☐ very important
   - ☐ important
   - ☐ somewhat important
   - ☐ not important

2. How **relevant** were the required readings for Unit 4?
   - ☐ very relevant
   - ☐ relevant
   - ☐ somewhat relevant
   - ☐ not relevant

3. How **useful** were the activities for Unit 4?
   - ☐ very useful
   - ☐ useful
   - ☐ somewhat useful
   - ☐ not useful

4. How **relevant** were the practicum requirements for Unit 4?
   - ☐ very relevant
   - ☐ relevant
   - ☐ somewhat relevant
   - ☐ not relevant

5. Please use the rest of this page to make suggestions for improving the objectives, required readings, activities, and practicum requirements for Unit 4.

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